APRIL 30th ISSUE, 1925
VOL. LII No. 3

ADVENTURE

25 Cents

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1925
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THREE TIMES A MONTH

# Adventure

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Robert Simpson
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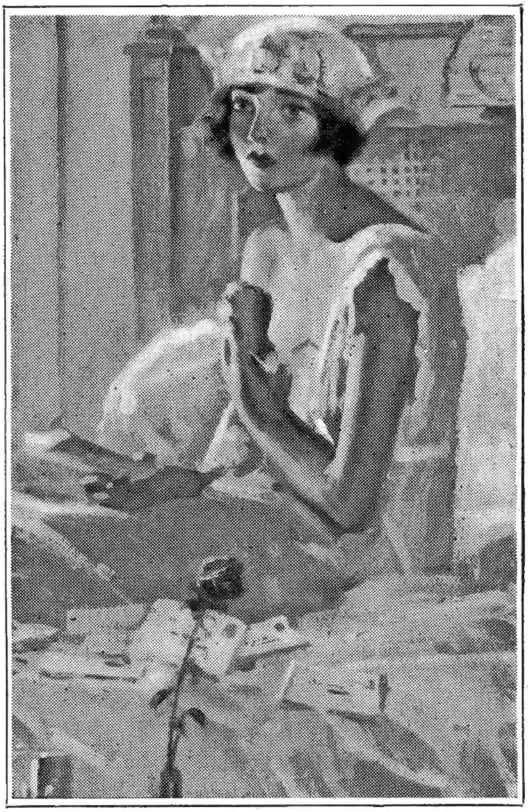
1 Complete Novel
1 Complete Novelette



*Are You a*
*Systematic*
MAN
*with a*
*Haphazard*
WIFE
?

Does money run through her fingers? Is she forever overdrawn—always changing servants—always needing clothes? Every man, whether or not he has a wife as yet, should read "The Critic on the Hearth," a very amusing story on this subject written by Ernest Poole, famous author of "The Harbor," "His Family," "The Avalanche," etc. If you are a married man read this story, before you go home to-night, "The Critic on the Hearth"

*By* ERNEST POOLE
in
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*Magazine*
FOR APRIL

*Everybody's*
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*On Every News-stand*

# Feel like a New Man in Two Minutes

## Amazing Restoration in SPINE-MOTION

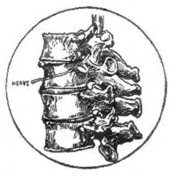
Hobart Bradstreet
65 Years Young

YOU never give a thought to that spine of yours, do you? If you did you would be another man altogether. You'd have twice the energy you have—twice the strength and stamina. You'd pitch into your work with the avidity of a boy for play. You'd revel in anything that meant activity. You'd be a superman compared to what you are.

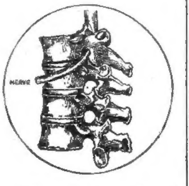
But, vital as it is, you pay no attention to your spine. What are the consequences? A word about the spine will explain.

The spine is a series of small bones placed one above the other. Between each pair of bones (vertebrae) is a cartilage which acts as a cushion or shock absorber, taking up the weight and shocks thrown on the spinal column as we stand or walk. Since nothing in the ordinary activities of us humans stretches the spine, these once soft and resilient pads are flattened down, become thin and hard. One's spine then does not absorb the shocks sustained *but transmits them straight to the base of the brain.* Then come headaches — backaches — "nerves"— insomnia—habitual tiredness. We have not one-half the force and "pep" we should have. We do not get the joy out of work or play we should. We are only about 50 per cent efficient.

### Why You Must Keep Your Spine "ELONGATED"



How bones close in on the delicate nerves when the spine "settles," shriveling the nerves and draining vitality.



How "elongating" the spine keeps the bones apart and the nerves full and free to perform their functions.

When the cartilage is worn down to a certain point, nerve impingement may result. That is, two of the vertebrae may curve so close together as to "pinch" or press upon a nerve leading from the spinal column to an organ which the nerve controls. Then there *is* trouble! If the impinged nerve has to do with the liver, then liver trouble. If with the stomach, stomach trouble. If with the bowels, constipation. And so on.

### Why the Spine Needs Stretching

The spine needs the peculiar motion, the flexing, the laxation, it would get if we lived as man primeval did, in order to loosen up the spine—to "elongate" it—to take the burden off the cartilage and the pressure off the nerves. No amount of violent exercise will do the trick, we know from experience, for often the most inveterate gymnast is a striking case of sub-laxation of the spine.

From my 25-year experience with spinal mechanics, I have evolved a method of SPINE-MOTION which seems to be the answer to the problem. My method of "laxating" the spine is a simple, boiled-down formula of just five movements. Neither takes more than one minute, so the whole process means but five minutes a day. But those movements, simple as they are, bring a wonderful change—*almost instantly!* **I have had many people come to me saying they were in perfect health and wanted to try my motion just out of curiosity, only to be amazed with the feeling of new exhilaration experienced in one execution of my spinal-motions.** Only the other day a prominent Chicago business man, known as a human dynamo, remarked to me after a few days of my system, "I didn't realize until now that I was only 50 per cent alive."

I have seen my spinal motions put sick people on their feet in a few days. I have seen many a chronic case of headache, nervousness, stomach trouble and constipation completely relieved in a matter of weeks. Speaking of constipation, I have one motion—a peculiar, writhing and twisting movement—that will, in fifteen minutes, in nine cases out of ten, bring a complete evacuation.

### I Promise You Startling Results

I know that there is something in my method for everyone, and I invite everyone to try it. I invite the young and the apparently "vigorous" to see what difference spine motion will make in their energies and capacities. I invite the ailing to see the direct relation between spinal mechanics and health. I invite men who are ageing prematurely to put to test my statement that a man's powers (in every sense) by nature, should continue full flush up to the age of 60, being only a matter of a sound nerve-mechanism.

No "apparatus" is required with my method. Just my few simple instructions made doubly clear by my photograph poses of the five positions.

### Send No Money

The small fee of $3 pays in full for my method. But I do not ask you to send the $3 in advance nor to make any payment or deposit whatever on delivery. I give you 5 days' free trial *wholly at my risk!* See the results you get in 5 days. If you do not experience something striking in the way of new health, new appetite, new desires and new capacities, just return the material and you won't owe me a penny. If you *do* see and feel the most wonderful benefits and wish to continue with the method, remit $3 in 5 days and everything is yours to keep. Mail the coupon today and get my method for 5 days' free trial.

HOBART BRADSTREET, Suite 5545
630 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill.

**I will try your SPINE-MOTION without risk if you will provide necessary instructions. Send everything postpaid without any charge or obligation, and I will try it five days. If I find SPINE-MOTION highly beneficial I can remit just $3 in full payment; otherwise I will return the material and will owe you nothing.**

*Name* ..............................................................................

*Address* ..........................................................................

ADVENTURE
April 30th, 1925

Published three times a month by The Ridgway Company at Spring and Macdougal Sts., New York, N. Y. Yearly subscription $6.00 in advance; single copy 25 cents. Entered as second-class matter Oct. 1, 1910, at the post-office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Volume 52
Number 3

# Watch Their Eyes

NOT so many years ago a boy was born in a luxurious home. His parents tried to give him every advantage that a boy should have. He loved Nature and delighted in long walks in the woods. One day when the boy was about thirteen years old a companion pointed out an interesting object. The boy could barely see it. For the first time he realized that something was wrong with his eyes and he told his father. Then came glasses and constant joy and astonishment at the bright new world with clean-cut outlines. All the wonders of the woods which he never dreamed existed were spread before his happy eyes. Books were no longer pages of letters with fuzzy tails. * * * * This boy was Theodore Roosevelt, who became President of the United States.

**The time to begin to protect the eyes is from the hour the baby is born. See that the doctor or nurse puts a drop of a prophylactic solution into the baby's eyes to prevent the serious disease commonly known as "babies' sore eyes" which often results in blindness.**

**Much of the eye trouble of later years comes from injury in babyhood. Never let the sun shine on a child's eyes—even when asleep. Baby eyelids are not sufficient protection. Diseases of childhood sometimes leave the eyes in a weakened condition. Children's eyes require attention during and after serious illness, especially measles and diphtheria.**

If parents such as his never knew that their son had defective vision, can anyone doubt that there are thousands of boys and girls today whose poor sight has not been discovered by their fathers and mothers?

Only 10 children in 100 at the age of nine years have even so-called perfect eyesight. *One* out of every *eight* school children has seriously defective sight or some disease of the eye which needs *immediate* attention.

If your child is the one out of eight whose eyes require attention you ought to know it. You cannot tell from the appearance of the eyes whether they are normal. Many of the eye diseases that lead to blindness are catching. If treated in time they can be cured.

Impress upon your boys and girls the danger of using towels that have been used by other people. Try to keep them from rubbing their eyes. Great danger comes from infection and dirt.

Watch almost any group of boys and girls learning to write. Faces turned sidewise, little doubled-up fists clutching pencils within a few inches of their eyes. There is the beginning of eye-strain. Children are frequently accused of inattention and stupidity when the truth is they cannot see clearly.

Get a good eye specialist. He will quickly discover whether your child needs eye treatment or glasses. If glasses are necessary he will prescribe them.

You would not willingly deprive your children of happiness in life and yet, unknowingly, you may deprive them of more than happiness. You may rob them of the power to be self-supporting citizens. You may deny them possible greatness.

THE LIGHT THAT NEVER FAILS

**There are upward of 100,000 blind people in the United States. According to the National Committee for Prevention of Blindness more than half of them are needlessly blind.**

**Only 20 of our 48 States have statutes providing for eye tests in schools. Less than one-third of the school children of the entire country have their eyes examined each year.**

**While parents may not suspect that there is anything wrong with their children's eyes it is sometimes easy for a teacher to detect difficulties. They have an opportunity to watch the way the children use their eyes—to see whether they squint when looking at the blackboard.**

**Teachers are doing a kindly and humane act in helping to prevent misery and possible blindness when they notify the parents of children who need to have their eyes examined.**

**The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company will be glad to mail, free to any one who writes for it, a booklet, "Eyesight and Health" which will be found helpful.** HALEY FISKE, *President.*

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April·30·1925
Vol·LIII··No·3

**Published Three Times a Month by The Ridgway Company**

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C. H. HOLMES, Secretary and Treasurer

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The editor assumes no risk for manuscripts and illustrations submitted to this magazine, but he will use all due care while they are in his hands.

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**Occasionally one of our stories will be called an "Off-the-Trail" story, a warning that it is in some way different from the usual magazine stories, perhaps a little different, perhaps a good deal. It may violate a canon of literature or a custom of magazines, or merely be different from the type usually found in this magazine. The difference may lie in unusual theme, material, ending, or manner of telling. No question of relative merit is involved.*

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A free question and answer service bureau of information on outdoor life and activities everywhere. Comprising seventy geographical sub-divisions, with special sections on Radio, Mining and Prospecting, Weapons, Fishing, Forestry, Aviation, Army Matters, North American, Anthropology, Health on the Trail, Railroading, Herpetology and Entomology.

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**Cover Design** . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . **C. Huerlin**

## A New Serial and Three Complete Novelettes

FOR years the feud between "*Hard*" *Wood* and the *Coopers* dragged on. They bided their time, fearing to meet him face to face, for his fists were iron-hard and his will was unswerving. But the day came when "*Hard*" left his home in the New York hills, and as soon as his back was turned the *Coopers* struck. "HARD WOOD," a three-part story, by Arthur O. Friel, begins in the next issue.

HE WAS a convict who rather liked his berth. Because *Adam Fule* was a good convict, a "trusty," and because the jail was one of the strongest and best-guarded in the state, the sheriff never once dreamed that a little bet would cause a State-wide furor. "ADAM FULE," a complete novelette by Hobart C. Montee, will appear in the next issue.

IN HIS degraded condition *George Treniff* was ashamed to meet his uncle for the first time. But in a brawl he saved the life of *Michael Blake*, who agreed to act as substitute in making the long journey to the elder *Treniff's* trading-post. "AN IMPOSTOR," a complete novelette of the Canadian fur country, by Leslie McFarlane, is in the next issue.

INTO the city of Auch rode *Cercamon the Troubador*, to hear a strange tale and to meet "THE BLACK THIEF." Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur's story of medieval France in the next issue is a complete novelette.

*Other stories in the next issue are forecast on the last page of this one.*

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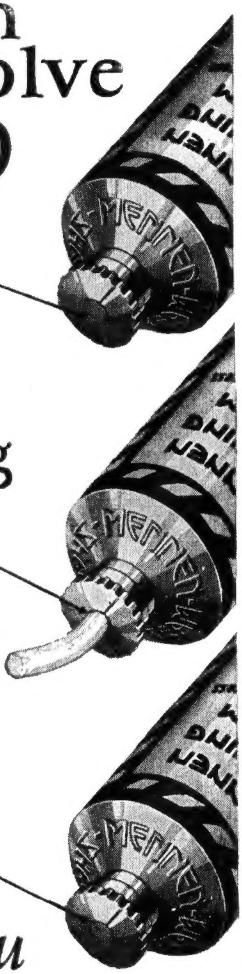
***Adventure* is out on the 10th, 20th and 30th of each month**

# Can You solve this?



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(*Mennen Salesman*)

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# New writer wins $1000 prize

THE $1000 prize offered by the Mission Film Corporation for the best screen story based on the title, "The Sunshine of Paradise Alley," has just been awarded to Otto E. A. Schmidt, of San Francisco.

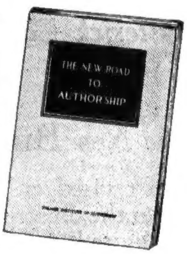
Mr. Schmidt's story was chosen because of its high rating in dramatic strength, entertainment value and picturable action—a tribute to the character of the training he received from the Palmer Institute of Authorship.

Scores of other students of the Palmer Institute are also selling short stories, novels, plays, special articles and photoplays.

The list includes Anita Pettibone, whose novel, "The Bitter Country," was recently published by Doubleday, Page & Co.; Phyllis Cumberland, who sold "Tangled Lives" to Thomas H. Ince; Miss Bernadine King, who wrote "What Did the Bishop Say?"; John M. Byers, who sold his first play to a New York Producer; Charles Shepherd, who wrote "The Ways of Ah Sin"; Tadema Bussiere, whose play, "The Open Gate," was given its premiere at the Morosco Theatre, Los Angeles, in October, 1924; Jane Hurrle, who wrote "Robes of Redemption"; Paul Schofield, who produced "Through the Dark," and Miss Winifred Kimball, who won the $10,000 prize in the scenario contest conducted by the *Chicago Daily News*.

## Write for This Book and Free Creative Test

The Palmer Institute is unique among educational institutions because it seeks for training only those with natural creative ability who can profit by its instruction. Therefore, no one is invited to enroll for its home-study courses until he or she has passed the Palmer Creative Test.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# WAIT

# !

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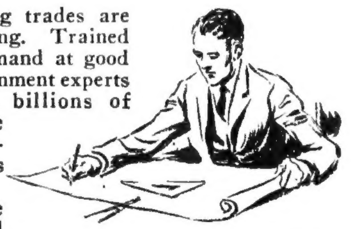

THE building trades are still booming. Trained men are in demand at good salaries. Government experts estimate that billions of dollars will be spent for construction this year.

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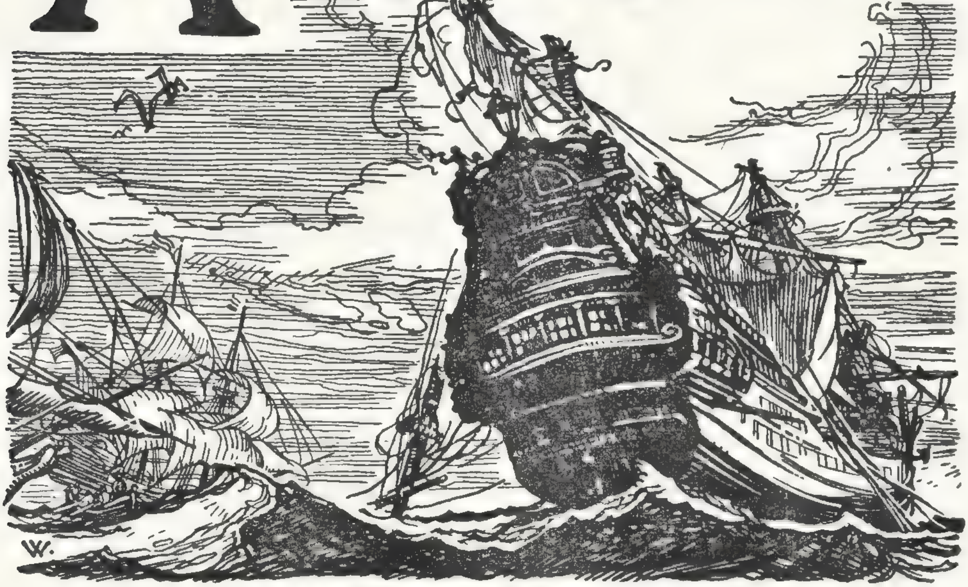
Adventure

April 30
1925
Vol. LIII No. 3



# LIBERTATIA

## A Complete Novel ... by Farnham Bishop

*Author of "The Eighteen-Twelver," "The Deacon's Seventy-Four," etc.*

## CHAPTER I

### THE UNKNOWN FLAG

YOUNG Harry Fairfax, Lieutenant of Foot in the service of the Honorable East India Company, braced himself between the bunk and the bulkhead of his tiny cabin on board the heavily rolling East Indiaman *Scarborough*, outward bound from London to Madras, and made the following entry in his pocket diary:

SOMEWHERE TO THE NORTH-
EASTWARD OF MADAGASCAR

Monday, September 21st, 1713.

Yesterday evening, the weather taking a turn for the worse, Captain Parker made preparations accordingly. He ordered the mainsail to be close-reefed, the topgallant masts struck and mizzenyard sent down, though at that time it did not blow very strong. Towards midnight it blew a gale and this ancient and overladen hulk began to leak most alarmingly. Turned up my soldiers to spell the seamen at the pumps.

About two in the morning the wind lulled, and we flattered ourselves the gale was breaking. Soon afterwards, we had much thunder and lightning from the northeast with rain, when it began to blow strong in gusts of wind, forcing the captain to take in the mainsail, leaving the ship under bare poles.

Scarcely had this been done when a gust of wind, exceeding in violence anything of the kind I have ever seen or had any conception of, laid the *Scarborough* on her beam-ends. The water forsook the hold and appeared between decks, so as to fill the men's hammocks to leeward. The ship lay motionless and to all appearances irrevocably overset.

Captain Parker shouted: "Cut away the main and mizzen-masts."

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> The mainmast went first, upon the bos'n's cutting one or two of the lanyards, without producing the smallest effect on the ship. Below, the pressure of the water was bursting in the lower deck port-lids. Scaling the slope of the deck, I clambered into the channels and with my sword slashed through one lanyard of the weather mizzen-shrouds. The rest snapped off like pack-threads, and the mizzen went by the board, followed an instant later by the foremast and the bowsprit.
>
> The ship upon this immediately righted, quickly and with great violence. Three guns broke loose in the 'tween-decks, and wrought great havoc before they could be secured. Several men were maimed and every movable destroyed, either from the shot thrown loose from the lockers or the wreckage of the deck. What guns remained were then thrown overboard to lighten the ship.
>
> The masts had not been overside long, before we were informed that the tiller was broken short in the rudder-head and the rudder itself gone. Thus we are as much disastered as would seem possible, and lying utterly at the mercy of the wind and sea. Yet we have two comforts: first, that the weather has moderated, and secondly, that although the ship is still leaking, the quantity of water in the hold is being steadily reduced by the pumps——

At that word, Fairfax paused, pen in air, and listened intently. The loud, rhythmic *cling-clang* of the brakes, that had rung in his ears continuously for the past ten hours, had suddenly ceased. The pumps had stopped!

It was characteristic of Fairfax that he corked his ink bottle, put the pen in his traveling-desk and even sanded the wet ink of the last few lines before closing his diary and going on deck. He liked to do one thing at a time and tidy up the loose ends neatly before beginning the next.

He found almost the entire ship's company gathered in the waist, where as many as could find a hand hold were tugging at the jammed and motionless brake beams of the old-fashioned chain pump.

" 'Vast heaving!" ordered Captain Parker, arriving on deck at the same time, having been roused from the deep sleep of exhaustion by the sudden cessation of the pumps. "What's the matter, Chips?"

"Roller's jammed at the bottom of the well and fouled the pump-chain hard and fast, sir," reported the carpenter.

"Can't you clear it?"

"Not bein' a mermaid, sir, I can't. There's seven foot of water in the well and risin' steady. I gives her two hours."

By the feel of the waterlogged hulk soddenly pitching and rolling beneath their feet, even the passengers could tell that the *Scarborough's* end was near. She was riding to a drag of four gun-carriages and an anchor lashed to a boom that kept her head to wind and acted, to some extent, as a breakwater. Although the storm had passed and the sky cleared, there was still a heavy sea running.

"Pick your men, Chips, and build a raft," directed Captain Parker, "Keep the rest bailing at the forehatch, Mr. Kennedy. Steward, provision the boats."

"The boat, you mean," drawled a cynical voice at the captain's elbow. "There's only one left, you know."

There was a sneering note of amused superiority in the speaker's tones that harmonized perfectly with the hard, selfish lines about his mouth and the insolent stare of his protruberant black eyes. Now that the masts were gone, he was the tallest thing left standing on the ship, and his shoulder breadth was in proportion to his height. He looked all the bigger because he was wearing a loose Cashmere dressing gown, and a red silk bandanna knotted about his head.

Such was the regular morning attire for a gentleman of the period to wear while his coat was being brushed and his periwig curled and powdered for the day. Thus robed and turbaned, his chain bristling with blue-black stubble, his arms folded and his feet braced wide apart as he stood there on the deck of the sinking ship, he looked half raja, half pirate. As a matter of fact, he was Lord Mornington, the newly appointed Governor of Madras.

"Only one boat," he repeated, as if challenging contradiction, "and precious little material for a raft."

No one contradicted him, for the statement was only too obviously true. Longboat and yawl, housed on the booms, jollyboat and gig, had all been swept overboard and lost when the ship went on her beam-ends. At the same time the lee quarter-boat, hanging at the davits, had been carried away. Only the starboard cutter remained. She was built to carry ten—and there were one hundred and fourteen men and two women aboard.

Captain Parker nodded gravely and beckoned Lord Mornington and Lieutenant Fairfax to follow him aft, until they stood by the wheel, beneath the projecting quarter deck. There was no one at the helm, since the rudder was gone, and they could speak without being overheard.

"Go to your cabins and load your pistols, gentlemen," said the grizzled skipper, as quietly as if he were reminding his passengers that it was time to dress for dinner. "My compliments to Lady Mornington, and warn her to dress warm and come on deck, with her maid, as quickly as she can. The sooner all four of you are in that boat and away, the better."

"Are you coming with us, Captain?" asked Fairfax.

"It is the first officer's boat," replied the captain reproachfully. "Mr. Kennedy is an excellent navigator. Her regular crew and four others are as much as she can carry safely in this sea."

Fairfax nodded comprehendingly.

"And if every one else comes rushing aft and tries to jump into her—and almost everybody will, of course—why then the boat will be swamped and nobody saved, unless you succeed in holding the poop ladder long enough for us to lower away."

"I'll try my best to, gentlemen," promised Captain Parker.

"But there are two poop ladders and you can't very well hold both at once, you know," Fairfax pointed out. "Suppose you take one and I the other, with a brace of pistols and a blade apiece."

"And give up your place in the boat?"

"Give it to young Ellison, the writer."*

"Don't want him," growled Lord Mornington. "He'd never live to reach land and he'd be no use if he did. What we need in India isn't inky-fingered milksops scribbling in ledgers, but veteran soldiers like yourself. Besides, you've picked up a lot of seamanship on this voyage and are worth your weight in the boat."

"Very true, my lord," approved Captain Parker.

The skipper's duty, as he saw it plain, was to save the governor and his lady, then the one other woman on board, and finally the male passenger who would be most useful to the company. The rest would have to look out for themselves, as they undoubtedly would, with knives and anything else handy, the minute they saw the boat being lowered away.

Fairfax, however, shook his head.

"I'll stay and take my chance on the raft, thank you."

"Why?" demanded Mornington, staring down at him incredulously.

A London wit had said of Mornington that he looked at every woman as if she were a street walker, and at every man as if he had his price writ plain upon his face. He sought for the selfish motive behind every action and, to do him justice, seldom failed to find it. He had no faith in anything except the utter sordidness of human nature, no fears, no manners, and no lack of success, except lately, at the card table.

Having gambled away half his patrimony, he had invested the other half judiciously in bribes, married a parvenu director's daughter, and so obtained his post at Madras. He frankly avowed his intention of recouping himself and returning home as soon as possible with a fresh fortune. He had no taste for business and a bottomless scorn for all mercantile enterprize. What attracted him were the rare opportunities for intrigue and armed intervention in India, where the Mogul Empire was rapidly falling to pieces, and every ambitious native ruler was out-bidding his neighbor for the growing support of John Company.

"What are you staying behind for, Mr. Fairfax?"

"My men," answered the subaltern, who was going out with thirty recruits for the Madras Fusileers.

"Those scum!" snorted Mornington. "The off-scourings of Newgate and the scrapings of the kennel."

"Your lordship describes their derivation very justly," replied Fairfax, with a smile that he tried to make as irritating as possible. "But I have consorted with their like, during the late war in Flanders, and found them better men than others who—stayed at home."

Mornington started and glared venemously. Fairfax deliberately turned his back and stood there, tapping his fingers on the inlaid steering wheel, and whistling the favorite marching tune of Marlborough's men in Flanders, sheer nonsense that had once sung a king out of three kingdoms:

"Lero, lero, lillibulero,
Lero, lero, bullen-a-la!"

Mornington stormed past him into the cabin, whence his loud, bullying tones could be heard, exhorting his wife and her maid to hurry.

"You have made my lord your enemy for

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* Clerk or factor's assistant.

life!" exclaimed the scandalized Captain Parker.

"And how long is that for, pray?" laughed Fairfax.

'Why, not for long, truly," admitted the sea captain. "And you do right, sir, to stay with your command to the end."

"Young Ellison has a mother and sister dependent upon him," answered Fairfax, "while I am free to go as I please. And tis well worth it, merely to have told my lord to his face what I think of him."

CHEERILY whistling "Lillibulero," Fairfax passed through the cuddy to his stateroom, where he carefully primed and loaded his pistols, and buckled on the heavier of his two service swords. Affectionately he unpacked an old weather-beaten red coat, with the buttons of a line regiment that had been raised for the war and disbanded at the peace, and pinned to its breast the cross he had won at Malplaquet. Then he took off John Company's coat and put on the Queen's—to die in.

On the quarter deck, he found Lord Mornington, looking more piratical than ever in a rough pea-jacket and with pistols in his belt, as he was helping his wife and her maid into the boat. Ellison and the steward were passing and stowing the provisions aboard, while the mate and his boat's crew were laying aft.

Hard on their heels came the rest of the crew and passengers, soldiers and seamen, English and Lascars, pouring aft with a rush that was suddenly checked at the foot of the poop ladders. The high-steeved poop rose like a fortress, loopholed and barricaded for musketry, and garrisoned by two grim looking officers, pistol in hand. The only way up was by the ladders, and the first men up would surely die.

But death was too close at their heels in any case for them to hold back long. They had no faith in the half built raft and the only boat now was being lowered away. Like stampeding cattle, the *Scarborough's* company surged blindly, irresistibly aft.

It was hateful work to shoot them down, but Fairfax knew that it had to be done. If he let that terrified mob pour over the taffrail and cascade down into the cutter, before she could be shoved off, then the boat would be swamped in a twinkling and the women drowned with the rest.

Pointing his pistols skyward, he clenched his thumbs in the hammers and brought the long barrels down with a sweep and a jerk that helped cock the stiff and awkward flintlocks. For a fraction of a second, before the hammers clicked home, he held the weapons straight out in front of him, on a level with his eyes, before depressing them on the target. And it was at this instant, as the *Scarborough* dipped her blunt bows in the trough and raised her stern high on the crest of a mighty wave, that Fairfax saw a patch of white far out on the heaving blue.

"A sail!" he shouted. "A sail!"

The surprize and joy in his voice and eyes were too genuine to be doubted even by that crazy, desperate mob. Two Lascars alone failed either to catch his words or to believe them. Spitting like wildcats, they sprang up the poop ladder, slashing and stabbing with their knives.

Down came the long, heavy pistol barrels clubwise on one man's wrist and the other's turban, knocking them both back into the waist. When they had picked themselves up, the two made no attempt to renew the attack nor did they pay any further attention to Fairfax, but turned like the rest of the crew to stare anxiously at Chips.

The carpenter had jumped up on the starboard rail and stood there, balancing himself with nothing to hold on by but his bare, horny toes, while he stared to windward.

"It's the truth he tells!" Chips shouted. "Two tall ships, bearing down on us from the nor-nor'east."

"Secure the cutter!" commanded Captain Parker, uncocking his pistols, while a joyous cheer went roaring up. "Lash a spar to the stump of the foremast and bend on an ensign, union down."

The signal of distress was soon displayed and a gunshot from one of the approaching ships told them that it had been seen. The *Scarborough* was sinking fast, but by bailing hard, they could keep her afloat long enough for the strangers to take them off.

On the quarter deck, Captain Parker was studying the rapidly approaching craft through a long brass telescope, while Fairfax was studying the puzzled look on the skipper's face.

"Not English?" he suggested.

"A French built frigate and a Portygee

galleon out 'o Goa. Dashed queer consorts to be cruising together in these waters."

The Portuguese at that period were notoriously jealous and intolerant of all other Europeans in the East. Particularly did they dislike and most ardently were they hated by the French, for Portugal, in the beginning, had sided with France and then turned against her in the recent War of the Spanish Succession.

"They have evidently heard that peace has been signed," surmised Fairfax.

The skipper snorted and thrust the telescope into the soldier's hands.

"Take a look through this and see how peaceable they be!"

Unused to the glass, Fairfax at first could make out nothing but sea and sky. Then, as he was searching for the ships, now plainly visible to the naked eye, into the field of his vision rose the stump of a topmast, a battered maintop and then the yard and the swelling surface of the close-reefed main-course, dotted all over with patches of bright new canvas that spoke eloquently of recent shot holes.

Depressing the glass, he saw the deck of the galleon, furrowed and splintered with round-shot and marked with broad, dark stains which a gang of guarded prisoners were trying to scrub away. Dismounted guns leered drunkenly out of jagged holes that had once been ports, all along the galleon's spar and gun decks, on the side toward the frigate. She too had been lately in action, but had suffered far less damage. And now she held the victor's station, with the galleon under her lee.

"The French have won the fight, but they'll lose their prize-money," commented Fairfax. " 'Twould seem that the news of the Peace of Utrecht had not yet reached these distant seas. When they learn from us that the treaty has been signed and the galleon is no lawful prize, then there'll be hard swearing on King Louis' ship."

"She's no king's ship," declared Captain Parker positively.

"But she is a French frigate, surely; *Dauphin* class, forty guns?"

"That's her rate. But where's her pennant?"

"By jove, you're right, sir! She hasn't any."

The long, slender pennant at the main, that was flown by every man-o'-war afloat, was missing. Nor did either the frigate or the galleon display any national ensign.

"She must be a 'letter of marque'," surmised Fairfax. "The French have often sent out their frigates and even ships-of-the-line, under captains like Jean Bart, on the privateer account."

"And my Lord Bellomont sent out Captain Kidd on the same account to these same waters," answered the skipper significantly. "Plenty of privateersmen turn pirates after every war. Drowning men can't be choosers, Mr. Fairfax, but I wish that fellow would show his colors."

"Your wish is granted," replied Fairfax, as a stopped ensign was run up to the frigate's mizzen-peak. Another was hoisted on the galleon and both were broken out at the same instant.

"Huzza! 'Tis the white flag of France!"

"Nothing of the kind, sir!" contradicted the captain, snatching the spy-glass and leveling it at the frigate's bunting. "It's white and not black, thank God, but the design is monstrous strange. Looks like a female figure, with some foreign lingo writ large above her head. Here, take the glass and see if you can read it."

"It is an unknown flag," declared Fairfax, studying it through the telescope. "A goddess on a white field, with the motto, '*Pro Deo et Libertate*'?"

## CHAPTER II

### CAPTAIN MISSON

"MAY I have a word with you in private, my lord?"

"What the deuce for?" demanded Lord Mornington, from his place in the boat.

The cutter had been swung out over the starboard quarter and was being lowered away when Fairfax raised the cry, "A sail!" After that, it had been hoisted again and hung there, outboard, with a couple of hands holding on by the falls and two others fending her off and steadying her with boat hooks fast to the fife rail. By standing up on a thwart, Lord Mornington could look over the rail and see what was going on aboard. Moreover, as much of the port bulwarks had been swept away, he had a good view of the on-coming frigate and galleon in the offing.

He regarded Fairfax, who was leaning down and speaking to him over the fife rail.

with unconcealed suspicion. Whatever happened, Mornington was bent on keeping his place in the boat.

"Why can't you say what you have to say, here and now?" he asked.

Fairfax tried to whisper his message, but the wind blew his words away. He glanced significantly toward the unperceiving Lady Mornington, then down at the pistols in her husband's belt, and tapped the butts of his own.

Mornington thought that he understood him perfectly. Fairfax must be trying to force a fight on him, and hinting that you can not discuss a duel in the presence of a lady. The noble lord may have been backward about volunteering to fight in Flanders, but not in upholding his reputation as the deadliest swordsman and crack shot in London. He sprang up out of the boat and over the rail as eagerly as Romeo scaling Juliet's balcony.

"We can't fight here," he said regretfully, as they walked away from the after rail to the forward end of the cramped quarter deck. "But I shall be at your service, Lieutenant, as soon as those homeward-bounders set us ashore at Cape Town."

He spoke with greater courtesy than he had shown to any one aboard since the beginning of the voyage. Fairfax, on the other hand, seemed greatly embarassed, and wilfully to misunderstand the governor's obvious meaning.

"As you say, we can't fight," he replied, pointing forward along the dismantled spar deck. "Guns gone, masts gone, ship going down under us. We couldn't fight a cock boat, let alone those fellows yonder. We're utterly at their mercy—and scant mercy we'll find, I fear."

"What the plague d'ye mean?" cried Mornington. "Isn't that a French cruiser and the other a Portingale?"

"Look at their colors and their crews," invited Fairfax, pointing to where the two ships were now coming about and backing their topsails within easy musket-shot of the *Scarborough's* shattered port rail.

The fantastic ensigns blew out straight and plainly to be seen with the naked eye. Below them, on deck or in the rigging, swarmed a mixed mob of coal-black, fuzzy-headed savages, turbaned Hindus, Arabs and Malays, Dutchmen in unmistakable breeches, French bluejackets in torn and dirty uniforms and an all-nation crowd of merchant jacks, some bare to the waist, others gay in gaudy silks, and all heavily armed.

"Pirates, by gad!"

"Aye, Madagascar pirates," affirmed Captain Parker, who had stepped up beside them. "They are the cruelest and vilest brutes afloat. Whatever our own fate may be my lady must not fall into their hands alive, nor the young maid either, my lord."

"So that's what you were hinting at," scoffed Mornington, rounding on Fairfax. "Wanting me to shoot my wife as if she were a mare with a broken leg! D'ye think those rascals are fools enough to molest a lady of her quality? Not they—they'll hold the pair of us to ransom and a fine fat sum they'll squeeze out of the company."

"That may be, but I warn your lordship to expect no regularity or discipline among the pirates," said Captain Parker. "Their captains have no authority save in action. Satan himself couldn't rule that crew or make them spare a prisoner."

"Greed of gold rules them as it does the rest of the world," retorted Mornington. "Present me as the Governor of Madras, and all will be well."

"For my Lady Mornington, yes," acknowledged Fairfax. "So far I am inclined to agree with you, my lord. But even though she is one of your household, I am worried about the maid."

"Rot the wench! *Ayahs* are cheap in India. Shoot her or keep her yourself, since you're so sweet on her."

SKILLFULLY handled, a swarm of boats from the frigate and the galleon crawled over the rough sea toward the helpless *Scarborough.* Outstripping the rest, a dozen lengths in the lead, sped a beautiful twelve-oared galley fit for an admiral's barge. Her crew alone wore white shirts and knee breeches, clean and of uniform cut.

As she came alongside, the officer in the stern-sheets dropped the yoke lines and stood up, while the boat was lifted high on a wave. So low had the East Indiaman sunk in the water and so utterly had a great stretch of her port bulwark been torn away, that the stranger easily sprang aboard and stood coolly looking about him on the *Scarborough's* deck.

He was a small man, short and slender and almost effeminately handsome, with dark, regular features and black, curly hair, which he wore long and hanging down over his shoulders, instead of the horsehair periwig of the period.

He looked like a pretty girl masquerading in her brother's clothes, until you noticed his narrow hips, broad shoulders and powerful chest. He wore the blue uniform of an officer of the French navy, without epaulets or other insignia of rank, but with the red facings worn only by officers of noble birth.

"Where is the captain?" he asked in English, with only the faintest flavor of foreign accent.

"Here I am, sir," answered Captain Parker, descending into the waist to meet him.

"What ship is this?"

"The *Scarborough*, East Indiaman, London to Madras, James Parker, master."

"We can not possibly save her," declared the newcomer decisively. "Muster your people here in the waist and my boats will take them off. How many have you aboard?"

"One hundred and sixteen."

"As many as that? With your permission, I shall signal my boats to come alongside at once."

Running up on the quarter deck, closely followed by the somewhat bewildered Parker, he jumped up on the rail, waved his three-cornered hat and beckoned vigorously to the on-coming flotilla. Loud yelled the coxswain, and the savage looking rowers bent to their oars.

"Tell him who I am before his ruffians lay us aboard," whispered Lord Mornington to Captain Parker.

"Sir," said the British skipper, as the Frenchman jumped down from the rail, "may I present my distinguished passenger——"

"But certainly!" interrupted the other, with unexpected fervor. "Present me without delay!"

Seizing Parker's arm, he swept him past the astonished Lord Mornington and aft to the fife rail, over which were peering the very attractive faces of Lady Mornington and Lucy the maid. Roused by the sound of a new and interesting male voice, for the first time in months, my lady had told the mate to have the boat hauled up high enough for her to see—and be seen.

"My Lady Mornington," said Captain Parker, "let me present——"

Then he stopped, for the newcomer had not yet revealed his name.

"A thousand pardons," apologized the stranger, bowing with all the graces of Versailles. "Permit me to introduce myself. I am Captain Misson, commanding the frigate *Victoire*, in the navy of Libertatia."

Followed an awkward pause, while the Morningtons, Parker and Fairfax exchanged bewildered and apprehensive glances.

Was the man mad or jesting? What and where in the world was "Libertatia"? None of them had ever heard that name before.

Again Captain Misson bowed to Lady Mornington.

"Will you not introduce me," he implored, "to your charming companion?"

"This," said Lady Mornington icily, "is my maid Lucy."

"How deliciously, how quaintly European!" exclaimed Captain Misson. "In Libertatia, we have abolished all such distinctions. Among us, all men are brothers, all women sisters, all children born to equal opportunities and in fellowship with all mankind. At present, we have the misfortune to be at war with all the nations of Europe. But you, my friends, must not consider yourselves our prisoners but our guests."

At that moment, a heavy report from the flooded hold warned them that the increasing air pressure had blown up the *Scarborough's* lower deck.

"To the boats!" commanded Captain Misson. "Allow me to place the ladies in a more commodious and stable craft."

Reaching down over the rail, he clapped his small white hands under Lucy's armpits. Big buxom girl though she was, the little man lifted her out of the boat and swung her up on deck as if she had been a child. It was a splendid feat of strength, which he repeated a moment later with the astonished Lady Mornington.

Then, taking Lucy's hand, he led her down the poop ladder and helped her aboard his barge as ceremoniously as if she had been a queen.

"That settles it," declared Lord Mornington with heartfelt conviction. "The fellow's a raving madman!"

## CHAPTER III

### THE CREED OF CARACCIOLI

WITHOUT delay or mishap, in spite of the heavy sea still running, all on board the sinking *Scarborough* were taken off and transferred to the *Victoire*, the galleon's boats assisting in the work. Scarcely was it completed when the old East Indiaman dipped her blunt bows under and went down.

Squaring their yards, the frigate and the galleon ran free to the southwestward, as if making for the Madagascar coast. On board the *Victoire*, the Englishmen were packed pretty closely below, but each man with his personal belongings intact, and furthermore provided with a hammock and blanket, a square meal and a tot of rum.

The British officers, after accepting an invitation to visit the orlop and see if their men had any complaints, returned in a state of bewilderment. Such humane treatment of prisoners was a thing unheard of in that rough age.

"Stripped and plundered and kicked below to rot in the bilges—that's how I was treated when I was taken by a Dunkirk privateer off the Lizard in 1709," confided Captain Parker to Lieutenant Fairfax. "And I've done the same to Frenchies in my time," he added in a cautious whisper too low to be overheard by the other inmates of the *Victoire's* crowded wardroom.

The English skipper, mates and subaltern had been given berths there among the frigate's watch officers. These were a hairy, affable, rough-and-ready lot of very able seamen, without a single silk stocking, powdered wig or epaulet to their names. And the way they fraternized with the crowd forward was enough to make any proper-minded naval or mercantile marine officer drop stone dead.

The wardroom was separated from the rest of the gun deck only by a movable canvas bulkhead, which had been rolled up and stopped to the deck beams overhead. The long, dark cavern of the 'tween-decks, where most of the crew berthed, was blue with tobacco smoke, fragrant with rum and *eau-de-vie*, and roaring like a tavern with loud-mouthed arguments, badinage and song, punctuated by the flap of cards and the rattle of dice.

An ear-ringed *matelot* strolled casually into the wardroom, glanced curiously at *les officiers Anglais*, lighted his pipe at the lamp flame, and passed the time with the black-bearded first lieutenant, who, instead of ordering him to be flogged at the gangway, keel-hauled and hanged at the yard-arm for unheard of sacrilege, greeted him affectionately as "my old cabbage" and loaned him ten *louis d'or*.

"That proves they're pirates!" whispered the scandalized Captain Parker. "A French navy crew that have mutinied and cut all their officers' throats, except that girl-faced, smooth talking little monster Misson, and he was the ringleader in the business, mark my words!"

"Would a man capable of murdering his own messmates treat prisoners so handsomely?" objected Fairfax. "Here we sit at ease and liberty, wearing our swords and holding receipts for our pistols. Now who ever heard of a pirate giving any one a receipt?"

"And who ever heard of such goings on below decks, except in a pirate ship, I'd like to know?" demanded Captain Parker, glaring resentfully at the merry-making forward.

"'Tis more like an ale-house than a man-o'-war, I grant you. Yet along with all this liberty and license runs a most marvelous restraint and discipline."

"Restraint and discipline, egad! D'ye call it that, for a foremast hand to light his pipe at the wardroom lamp and beg a fistful of gold from the first officer? I'd teach him restraint and discipline with the cat!" rumbled Captain Parker. "Pray, where have you noted aught of restraint or discipline aboard this picaroon craft?"

"Do you speak French?" asked Fairfax, still in low tones.

"Not I."

"I picked up a deal of it in Flanders. For learning strong language, there's naught like a campaign in the Low Countries. I've been listening, ever since we came aboard, to these fellows' very free talk, and I give you my word I have not yet heard one of them use an oath or a blasphemy."

"Pious pirates! Well, I'll be ——!" roared the astounded British skipper.

He spoke English, but the last two words he used were so well known in France as the typical British expletive that Joan of Arc had combined them into one, as a handy synonym for "Englishman." Evidently the expression was equally intelligible to the

*Victoire's* officers, for the entire wardroom rose and stood looking down at Parker in shocked silence.

The hush was broken by the firm, reproachful voice of the black-bearded first officer, in a deep-pitched bass that seemed to make the deck-beams quiver underfoot:

"Monsieur, it is forbidden to use profane language aboard this ship, or to speak disrespectfully of *le bon Dieu.*"

THAT evening, while Fairfax and Parker were supping with the wardroom mess, Captain Misson was entertaining four guests at his own table. These were Lord and Lady Mornington, the melancholy Dom Pedro Fonseca, late commander of the Portuguese treasure galleon *Bom Jesus*, and Lucy Higgins, the maid.

Poor simple Lucy was frankly and honestly embarrassed at sitting down with the gentry. My lady kept her ideas on the subject strictly to herself, while my lord's manners and conversation were marvelously chastened and improved. No longer did he hurl sneering sarcasms at the head of every one else at the table, as had been his pleasant practise at meal-time aboard the *Scarborough*. You simply do not do that sort of thing when your host is an eccentric and presumably insane pirate, who might show his annoyance by nailing your ears to the mainmast, or politely inviting you to walk the plank.

So Mornington was holding himself in, while he hunted for the mercenary motive behind Misson's generous hospitality. The captain of the *Victoire* had given up his own stateroom to Mornington and Dom Pedro, while assigning a much larger and more luxurious cabin, silk-carpeted, sandalwood-paneled, with Oriental hangings and couches to be shared by Lady Mornington and Lucy.

"The quarters of Madame la Princesse," he explained casually. "Being indisposed, she has not accompanied me on this cruise."

Lady Mornington looked poisoned poniards but kept her lips firmly closed. She came to the table with an air of determined martyrdom that effectively damped down all Misson's efforts to kindle a conversation until Lucy timidly asked him—

"Please, sir, are you a prince?"

"I have not that honor," smiled Misson, "On the contrary, I am the simple citizen of a republic."

"Pray, sir, where lies this puissant commonwealth of yours?" asked Lord Mornington. "Could you not tell us something of its history? For I protest, its fame has not yet reached the ears of Europe."

"Its shores you shall see tomorrow," promised Captain Misson. "Its story, should you care to hear it, I can tell you now. But first I must tell you something about myself.

"I was born in Provence, of an ancient family, but with little hope of other fortune than what I could carve out with my sword. For my father, though master of a plentiful fortune of his own, had an even more plentiful abundance of children. Upon the completion of my education, he would have put me into the musketeers. But, being of a roving temper, I chose the sea.

"My father sent me aboard this very ship, then lying at Marseilles, with letters of recommendation to her commander, his friend and kinsman, Captain Fourbin. That noble and gallant officer received me with all possible regard and accepted me as a volunteer or candidate for a commission, very much like one of your English midshipmen.

"We made a long cruise in the Mediterranean, during which I took an ever increasing interest and delight in my profession, and labored to perfect myself in seamanship, gunnery and navigation. When I was not the first man out on the yard, I was below with the carpenter or the bosun, learning the parts of the hull and rigging, and the ways of working a ship.

"While the *Victoire* was at Leghorn, I obtained leave to visit Rome. There I fell in with a certain Dominican friar, and became completely converted to his way of thinking.

"This remarkable man had long since lost faith in organized religion. All he believed in was the existence of a Supreme Being, whose will is made manifest to us, not by revelation or inward light, but by the laws of nature. In short, he had become what is called a Deist.

"He could no longer honestly remain a Dominican friar, yet he dared not breathe a word of his change of belief, for fear of the Holy Inquisition. In Rome as in Spain, such heresies are not dealt with tenderly.

"I thought of a way out, which he leaped at gladly. I loaned him the necessary funds two days before I left Rome to rejoin my ship, and arranged to meet him at Pisa. There I found him, no longer in the habit of a Dominican but very cavalierly dressed, a sword by his side and a periwig hiding his tonsure. Thus disguised, he accompanied me to Leghorn and aboard the *Victoire*, where I introduced him to the captain as my good friend Signior Caraccioli, who desired to become a volunteer."

"Would the French Navy take a foreigner like that?" asked Lord Mornington.

"It is sometimes done and for this reason—" explained Captain Misson—"according to the strict letter of the law, the volunteers are born on the books as the captain's servants, and their chance of becoming lieutenants depends almost solely upon their interests at court. A man like Caraccioli, of gigantic stature and strength, deeply learned and speaking all the languages of the Mediterranean, would be well worth securing, even as an interpreter alone, for the nominal pay of a volunteer.

"But to our dismay, Captain Fourbin, though much taken with Caraccioli, informed us that he had just promised the last vacancy, on which we had been counting, to the son of a friend in France. He was sorry to disappoint my friend, but I must take him ashore.

"That, however, would have meant betraying Caraccioli to imprisonment and disgrace. While I was wondering what to do, there came an officer from the Podesta, with the news that two Sallee rovers were harrying the coast, and a petition from those in authority for Captain Fourbin to put out and fight the heathen.

"This he heartily agreed to do. In the bustle and confusion of sailing, it was easy for me to conceal Caraccioli in the after hold, where he lay hidden for three days and nights, at the end of which time we fell in with the two Barbary corsairs.

"These two Salleemen, the one of twenty, the other of twenty-four guns and both very heavily manned, made bold to fight our frigate. The *Victoire*, though pierced for forty guns, at that time had only thirty mounted, so the odds were in their favor.

"At the first shot, Caraccioli rushed up from his hiding-place to fight. The engagement was long and bloody. Again and again the corsairs tried to close and lay us aboard, only to be baffled by our better seamanship and straighter shooting. We hulled their smaller ship with a round-shot between wind and water, forcing her to sheer off out of range, while her people ran her guns over to the other side, to bring her on the careen and stop the leak. This being done too hastily, she overset and went down with all on board.

"Her consort, seeing this disaster, made all sail to escape. But the *Victoire* overhauled her and clapped her aboard. Caraccioli was the first man over the side, roaring like a lion as he sprang. The Turks met us manfully, plying their simitars so well that we were beaten back to our own decks. There Caraccioli rallied and led us on a second time, hewing the heathen down with our cutlases until the decks were carpeted with their dead.

"As the Moslems broke and fled for shelter below, I saw one of them jump down the main hatchway with a lighted linstock. Caraccioli, suspecting his design, leaped after him and, reaching him with his sword-point, slew him the moment he was going to set fire to the powder.

"After that, there was no more talk of setting my friend ashore. Nor was there any lack of room for him aboard, for we had lost heavily. Caraccioli was entered on the books as a volunteer, the prize and prisoners were sold at Leghorn, and then, the time of her cruise being out, the *Victoire* returned to Marseilles.

"In the Spring of 1712 she was ordered round to Rochelle, thence to convoy some merchantmen to the West Indies. During this long voyage, Caraccioli acquired not only a surprizing mastery of seamanship, but an even greater mastery over the minds of most of our crew. The new hands were Rochellois, forcibly converted Huguenots, torn from their families by the maritime conscription, and burning with resentment against the established religion and the royal authority. Such men were soon won over to Caraccioli's creed, which was both religious and political.

"When they had felt the effect of his theology, he fell upon government. Was not every man born free and with as much right to what would support him, as the air he breathed? A contrary way of arguing would be to accuse the Deity of cruelty and injustice, for he brought no man into the world to pass a life of penury. The vast difference we perceive between man and man is due only to avarice and ambition on one hand, and cowardly submission on the other.

"In the beginning, declared Caraccioli,

government was purely paternal. Every father was the head, the prince and monarch of his family, and obedience to such was both just and easy, for a father has compassionate tenderness for his children. But ambition creeping in, the stronger family set upon and enslaved the weaker, and by this additional strength overran a third; by every conquest gaining force to make others, and this was the first foundation of monarchy.

"Pride increasing with power, man usurped the prerogatives of God, over his creatures, that of depriving them of life, which is a privilege that no one had over his own, for, as he did not come into the world by his own election, he ought to stay the determined time of his Creator. Death given in war is by the law of nature allowable, since it is for the preservation of our own lives. But no crime ought to be thus punished, nor any war undertaken, except in defence of our natural right, which is such a share of earth as is necessary for our support.

"SO PREACHED Caraccioli, secretly and continuously, until a majority of the crew were converts to his creed. But though agreeing with him in every particular, I forbade any attempt to put his theories into practise aboard the *Victoire*, so long as she was commanded by my gallant kinsman, Captain Fourbin. That true Catholic and Frenchman would have resisted to the death, and I would not have his blood upon my head. Neither Fourbin nor his officers had the least suspicion of what was going on among the crew.

"We delivered our convoy safely at Guadeloupe, and then put out for a cruise in the Caribbean. Off Martinque we fell in with an English forty-gun ship, the *Winchelsea.* Her first broadside wrought fearful destruction aft, killing among others, Captain Fourbin and all three of his lieutenants.

"The sailing master would have struck, had I not forcibly prevented him. Assuming command, I ordered Caraccioli to act as lieutenant and urged the crew to fight on. They responded valiantly, and fought the ship six glasses.*

"Toward the end of that time, we had exhausted all our cartridge and were loading with loose powder. The spilt grains blackened the deck about each gun, and the powder boys as they ran left trails from the batteries to the magazine. The rammer men were too tired to sponge out properly, and the guns were foul with smoldering shreds of wadding. At any moment we might have suffered the same fearful calamity that now suddenly befell our foes.

"I saw the *Winchelsea's* mainmast leap into the air, and her hull heave up and break asunder amidships, as a great burst of flame, mingled with shattered timbers, rigging, gun carriages and the mangled limbs of men rushed roaring to the sky. A lifting cloud bank of powder smoke and the wide flung wreckage dotting the sea were all that remained of that gallant ship.

"Our boats were lowered but we picked up only one survivor, a Lieutenant Franklin, from whom we learned the name of his ship before he died.

"When I returned aboard from that errand of mercy, I found Caraccioli delivering a fervid oration from the break of the quarter deck, to the crew assembled in the waist. A score of hands seized me as I came over the side, lifted me on high and bore me to the poop, where Caraccioli embraced me, while the rest brandished their blades and shouted—

" '*Vive le Capitaine Misson et son savant Lieutenant Carracciolil*' "

"I had been chosen by acclamation to be their leader and found an ideal commonwealth in the Southern Seas. Ah, but that was a great moment!

" 'I accept!' I told them. 'Though the tyrants of Europe will assuredly misjudge us, and wage war on us as pirates, let us not falter but rather let us anticipate them, by declaring war against all the maritime nations of the world. But we shall fight, not beneath the black flag of piracy, but beneath the white banner of truth and justice. Choose your officers, and then let us decide which course to sail.'

"A council was held, rules drawn up, and the decision reached to sail for Madagascar and the Red Sea. Off the West Coast of Africa we captured a large, armed English merchantman. Her captain and the others who had fallen in the fight we buried with all honor on the shore. The prisoners we dealt with according to our creed. Those who wished to depart were allowed to do so, in a well-stored and seaworthy pinnace.

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* Three hours. The sand in the seaman's watch glass ran out in thirty minutes.

The rest of their own free will were admitted to our fellowship. Dividing our augmented company, I placed the prize under the command of Caraccioli. Because of her ornate carving and gilt-work, we renamed her the *Bijoux*.

"Rounding the Cape, we cruised in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. It would take too long to relate our many adventures and battles, in one of which Caraccioli lost his right leg, or of our alliance with the brave and beautiful sister princesses of the island of Johanna, and of the war we waged together against their oppressor, the King of Mohila. Let me tell you briefly how at last we came to found our republic.

"Seeking for a place to careen the *Victoire*, I discovered a noble bay, near the northern extremity of Madagascar. Off this bay opened a spacious, beautiful, and securely land-locked harbor. Its shores seemed both salubrious and fertile, but utterly uninhabited. Not until our exploring parties had pushed two days' journey inland did we come in contact with any of the black Malagasy. These were herdsmen, who told us that their tribe, the Antankara, dwelt south of that point, but that no one dwelt on the northern tip of the island.

"There, beside the nameless bay, we laid out the City of Libertatia. Shiploads of laborers from Johanna helped us clear streets, plant crops, build houses, dig docks and erect fortifications. Many of them chose to remain and take out citizenship, like the hundreds of European seamen and African slaves that we have met and liberated from tyranny on the seas. We are of diverse tongues and many races, but we are all Libertatians, which signifies: 'Free men.' "

## CHAPTER IV

### THE PORT OF FREE MEN

THEY made their landfall next day at dawn. Over the horizon to the southwestward loomed the sharp peak of a tall volcanic cone.

"Mount Ambohita," explained Captain Misson to his passengers as they walked the poop after breakfast. "The sacred mountain of the Antankara. It lies two day's journey to the southward, and there we sometimes meet and trade with the tribesmen. To us the mountain is a useful landmark; to them it is a sanctuary. For centuries the Antankara have buried their dead kings in a certain spot on the eastern slope of Ambohita, where the first rays of the rising sun will shine upon their graves. There they sleep, those savage monarchs, each in his rude stone tomb, with all his treasures about him."

"Treasures?" repeated Lord Mornington, his somber eyes lighting with interest at the word. "What sort of treasure?"

"I do not know," replied Misson indifferently. "As we wish to keep on good terms with the Antankara, we have not desecrated any of their graves."

"Then what makes you believe that they have buried treasure there?"

"It is the custom of barbarians, the world over. Besides, the Antankara interpreters have boasted more than once that their King Rafangoro is the richest king in the world, even though he has inherited nothing but their cattle from his ancestors, since each of them has taken all his other wealth with him to the tomb."

"The royal cemetery must be well worth plundering, then. Gold dust, I suppose, and diamonds?"

"Very possibly," agreed Misson. "I have heard that the land to the southward is rich in gold. Certainly there is none to the northward, where we dwell. Ambohita, as you can see, is a volcano, long extinct but anciently active, and its eruptions have covered the land with lava and scoriæ, even to Cape Amber. You can grow good crops on volcanic soil, properly tilled, but you will never find gold there."

"Unless you bring it with you," hinted Mornington, with a significant glance at the galleon to leeward. "I understand that you have made a very pretty catch of gold dust and ingots aboard the *Bom Jesus*."

"To the value of half a million of your English pounds, with as much more in diamonds, pearls, rubies, sandalwood, cashmere silks and choice spices. She is a very rich prize, but not the most valuable that we have taken."

"Egad! What, pray, was that wondrous argosy?"

"A Dutch ship, bound for Ceylon, with seeds, tools, building material and all manner of farming implements, besides forty stout recruits for our commonwealth. A colony can not live by gold alone. As the future Governor of Madras, remember that, my lord."

Captain Misson bowed and walked away, followed by a rueful stare from the chagrined Lord Mornington. He had been anxious to keep his governorship a secret, ever since he had learned that he need not proclaim it in order to save his life. But you can't keep a secret on shipboard. Somebody had betrayed him—that wench Lucy, most like—and now he'd have to pay a monstrous ransom.

Or rather, John Company would have to pay it for him. But that would leave him heavily in the directors' debt, and the odds were that they would recall him before he had half a chance to make his fortune. Was there ever such vile luck? Here he was in the golden East, with treasure on every side, afloat and ashore, but never a grain for him. He frowned at the golden galleon and scowled at the sacred mountain with its treasured tombs. Pirates and dead men had no business with so much gold. How could he win it for his own?

NOON found them entering the broad mouth of a spacious bay, its low lying shores stretching far away on either hand. Here on the coast was none of the strange and beautiful flora peculiar to inland Madagascar, but the mangrove and coconut palm common to all tropic shores from Cancer to Capricorn. Behind the fringe of cocos and screw palms extended a desolate, barren looking volcanic plain, dotted with clumps of trees and broken by scattered hills that were dwarfed by the towering splendor of distant Ambohita.

Conning their way in with the mountain for a sailing mark, the frigate and the galleon bore straight for the westward shore of the bay. Just as the *Victoire* seemed on the point of running aground on an ugly coral reef, she tacked, and the line of coco palms broke and drew apart, revealing the mouth of the inner haven.

This harbor mouth was a gun-shot wide, and guarded on either hand by a strong octagonal earthwork, mounting four twenty-four pounders or long eighteens on each face, and flying the Libertatian flag. Loud boomed the saluting guns in a *feu-de-joie* as the *Victoire* and her splendid prize, with colors flying and music playing, sailed proudly in on the strong flood tide.

Observing Lieutenant Fairfax studying the fortifications with keen professional interest, Lord Mornington drew him aside.

"Of what avail are those two forts? Would they stop a fleet?"

"Not they," declared the Flanders' veteran. "They can bring but thirty-two pieces to bear on the entrance, between them. Before they could reload for a second salvo, the tide would carry the van-ship of the attack well past the forts."

"Suppose the fellows built a boom across the entrance?" suggested Mornington.

"'Twould be of no use in this swift tideway With a strong tide, a press of sail, and a stout heart on the quarter deck, even a single ship can charge a boom and burst it asunder with her speed and weight. So it was done at Londonderry and again at Vigo. Any man-o'-war could force her way into this nest of pirates. The only question is: Could she force her way out again? See what a formidable fleet the rogues have here."

Beside the *Victoire* and her prize, there were three other large, armed vessels in the beautiful landlocked harbor now opening into view. Riding at anchor, with their broadsides bearing on the narrow entrance, lay a captured Portuguese fifty-gun ship, and a heavily-armed English merchantman, whose ornate giltwork proclaimed her the *Bijoux*. A third square-rigger was hove down to a hulk alongshore, with a swarm of black men scraping her foul green underbody and caulking her seams. The tap of the caulkers' mallets mingled with the clatter of shipwrights' hammers from the nearby yard, where two large sloops were being built in a well-timbered dry-dock, dug out of the bank at the mouth of a large creek.

"A regular naval establishment, egad!" exclaimed Lord Mornington. "Dock-yards, sheer-hulk and all. A fine long wharf of sawn timber to land their plunder at, while we at Madras have naught but Massula boats and an open roadstead. There's been nothing like this since old Port Royal, in the days of the buccaneers. Sir Henry Morgan was a master-hand at piracy, but this Frenchman is his match."

"And something more, sir," added Fairfax. "Morgan sacked many a settlement, but he never built one. This is no mere careening place, but a thriving town."

Southward from the high stockade surrounding the busy shipyard, a crescent of snow-white sand curved round the western end of the hidden harbor. Everywhere else the shore line was a writhing tangle of gray-green mangroves, stabbing down to strike root again in the foul blue slime from which they sprang. The only decent landing-places were along that one stretch of open beach that began abruptly at the creek beside the shipyard, and ended with equal suddenness at a fantastic lava dike, a mile to the southward.

Back of the beach, an extensive grove of screw palms and cocos covered the ground as far inland as a man on shipboard could see. Only in the center were the ranks of the tree trunks broken by a wide roadway running straight inland, to where the gleaming walls of two large, white buildings showed above the swaying, undulating mass of palm fronds. The smaller of these white houses was roofed with thatch; its neighbor, at the head of the avenue, was crowned with a low, white dome. Highest of all, from the top of a lofty flag staff before the dome-roofed building, flew the banner of Libertatia.

The only other object visible above the tree tops made Fairfax's thoughts fly back to the Low Countries. It was a windmill, with its brown canvas vanes revolving busily in the brisk sea breeze, and looking exceedingly strange and exotic against the dark, rich blue of the tropic sky. Obviously it was part of that cargo of colonial supplies for the Dutch East Indies, of whose capture Misson had spoken.

While the captain had been telling his story in the cabin, the big bull-throated lieutenant Voix de Foudre had been expounding with equal willingness in the wardroom to the deeply interested Fairfax. Beginning with a tactful apology for Captain Parker's strong language, the subaltern had drawn out Voix de Foudre at great length on the history and institutions of Libertatia.

Nothing else impressed Fairfax, of all that he had heard and could now see of the freebooters' colony, so much as that peaceful, prosaic windmill. Misson's success in persuading his fellow-outlaws to erect a grist mill, and, apparently, to raise a crop for it to grind into flour, was more astounding than any victory afloat or ashore. The more he thought of the sheer hard work involved, the more Fairfax wondered how Misson could have got it done. Like the rule against swearing, it struck him as something new and strange in piracy.

He tried to point this out to Lord Mornington, who, however, saw no mystery or novelty in it whatsoever.

"Algiers and Tripoli over again," he declared dogmatically. "A pasha's palace for Misson and his nut-brown princess, another palace for the Grand Mufti Caraccioli to say his prayers and keep his harem in, good quarters for the pirates and janizaries, and a barracoon—that stockade yonder—for the slaves and captives who till the fields, build the forts and toil in the dockyard under the lash. Hasn't Misson been capturing slave ships, by his own account? There's his supply of labor, ready to hand. Witness that gang of blackamoors slaving away before your eyes, breaming yonder ship."

"You may be right, my lord. But whoever saw a slave-gang quit work and declare a holiday so suddenly before?"

The big black men on the ship that was hove down to the sheer-hulk were unanimously throwing down their tools, yelling, dancing, and waving their breaming torches to welcome the returning *Victoire*. One hurled his flaming faggot high in the air, kicked up his heels, and slid down the slope of the upturned hull to splash into the shallow water alongside. Wading ashore, the naked black giant came running and leaping along the curve of the beach, with all his friends after him.

Out of the half-seen fringe of cabins and shacks at the edge of the palm grove tumbled a mixed mob of brown men wearing white turbans and drawers, and savage looking white men with ragged beards and breeches, bandannas knotted about their heads, cutlases hanging from their belts, and pistols popping at the sky. Whooping, waving, and banging away in joyous welcome, the armed citizenry of Libertatia poured down across the beach and out on the wharf to greet the *Victoire* and her prize.

"Let go your anchor!" bawled Voix de Foudre, officer of the deck, to the prize master aboard the galleon. "Kedge in to the wharf tomorrow at slack tide, with your species of butter tub. To the braces, my children! Let us spare ourselves the labor of rowing ashore."

"Crazier and crazier!" gasped Captain Parker. "Laying a forty-gun frigate alongside a wooden pier, like a collier-brig. Lucky if they don't raze the wharf and drown half the rogues a-thronging it."

But Voix de Foudre knew his business, though he had his own carefree way of going about it. As he brought the *Victoire* up within hailing-distance, he left her to her own devices while he roared, in a voice that made itself heard through all the riot on the wharf—

"Caraccioli! *Comment se porte Caraccioli?*"

All on board strained anxiously to catch the reply.

"He mends apace!" shouted back somebody on the pier. "The wound-fever is abating and the leg stump healing clean."

"*Grace à Dieu! Vive Caraccioli!*" cheered the *Victoire's* crew.

Bearded seamen danced on the deck, embraced and kissed one another, with tears running down their weather-beaten cheeks. Half amused, half scandalized by this most un-English display of emotion, Fairfax was nevertheless impressed with the way the renegade friar had won the hearts of this hard-bitten, all-nation crowd of corsairs.

The *Victoire's* crew were still predominately French, but among their friends now catching and securing her bow- and stern-fasts, or tumbling aboard as she came alongside the dock, were many Britishers. These stared with surprize and interest at Fairfax's red coat. A tall, grim-faced, close-shaven man with a clean shirt on his well-squared shoulders, fixed his gray eyes on the subaltern's decoration, snapped to attention and saluted.

"Hot work in those gashly woods at Malplaquet, sir."

"Very," agreed Fairfax cordially, reading the other's rank at a glance. "What regiment, Sergeant?"

"The Buffs, sir. Turned out to starve at the peace and shipped on a slaver out of Bristol. Captain Misson captured us in the Bight of Benin and took us into the Brotherhood, blacks and all. I be a-drilling of 'em, thrice a week, in the market place. They shape very well, considering. I'd be proud to have you step over and inspect us some forenoon, sir."

"Thanks, I will," promised Fairfax, "unless I'm made to walk the plank or strung up to the yardarm, you know."

The ex-sergeant of the Buffs looked surprized and pained.

"Capital punishment has been abolished in Libertatia, sir."

"That's pleasant news for prisoners, indeed. Pray, what do your people intend to do with us?"

"That's a matter for the captains to decide, sir. There's Captain Misson going ashore now, sir, to consult with the others at the Reverend Mr. Caraccioli's bedside. A very remarkable man, the reverend, only he takes that new religion of his a bit hard at times, sir."

"The law against swearing, for instance?"

"Exactly, sir!" agreed the ex-sergeant, fervidly.

THE captains' council made short work of deciding the prisoners' fate. Before sundown, Captain Misson returned on board to announce the decree.

"The British and Portuguese officers and passengers may go ashore, on giving their parole to remain within the town limits, and to make no effort to escape or seduce any Libertatians from their allegiance to the republic. The soldiers and seamen will be kept under guard and employed in removing the guns and cargo from the *Bom Jesus*. As soon as she has been unloaded, disarmed, repaired, and fitly provisioned for a voyage to Goa or Bombay, all who desire to leave Libertatia may take the galleon and sail her to whichever of those two ports you may decide on among yourselves."

"Can I believe my ears, senhor?" gasped the astounded Don Pedro Fonseca. "You give me back my ship?"

"We do because, though staunch, she is too slow and of too ancient a model for our service."

"And you give us all our liberty, without ransom?"

"To hold prisoners to ransom is archaic savagery; a relic of the days when the poor spearman was put to death in cold blood, and the rich noble threatened with mutilation or death, in default of his tenants' payment of his ransom. Such deeds of the Dark Ages are abhorrent to the creed of Caraccioli."

"May you die, as you have lived, with honor," wished the Portuguese with a stately bow. "When that time comes, I shall intercede for a silken halter and have many masses said for your soul, Senhor Capitao Misson."

"You are really letting us go, free and unconditionally?" asked the incredulous Lord Mornington.

"Free—on this one condition," answered Misson. "On the day of your departure, you will each swear to and sign a solemn agreement not to bear arms or otherwise serve against Libertatia for the next twelve months. That is all."

## CHAPTER V

### PRACTICAL POLITICS

COMFORTABLY seated on a balk of driftwood half buried in the sand, Fairfax had finished writing up his diary for the day, and was rereading the history of the week that had passed since their arrival in Libertatia, when a shadow fell on the page. Looking up, he saw Lord Mornington standing behind him.

"Sit down, Lieutenant," said the governor affably, as the subaltern sprang to his feet and saluted. "I've been seeking a chance to have a word with you in private, and this seems to be a very fit place and time. No danger of eavesdroppers here."

The old worm eaten stanchion that served them for a seat lay half way up the beach, equally out of earshot from the wharf or the grove. Except for three merry brown children building a sandcastle down by the water's edge, the only persons in sight were the guards and the prisoners unloading the *Bom Jesus*.

The galleon had been kedged into the wharf, where she lay abaft the *Victoire*, with her yards sent down, her one remaining topmast struck, and her towering topsides looking all the taller because she rode so much higher after the lightening of her lading. Yet there was still much treasure left in the lower tier, where the very pigs of ballast were silver and gold. Lifted and passed from hand to hand and deck to deck, like powder charges in action, the ingots streamed overside, to be loaded into the waiting ox carts.

These were solidly built, gay-painted and very Dutch looking vehicles, part of the cargo of colonial supplies lost to Ceylon. Each was drawn by a yoke of Madagascar oxen, long-horned and humped like dromedaries. Apparently empty, for gold is a compact cargo, the carts creaked away in endless procession along the wharf and across the sand, to disappear behind the screw palms shading the long, straight road that led to the dome-roofed House of Caraccioli.

"Tons of it," muttered Mornington, unable to keep his eyes away from the wagons. "Tons of silver and gold carted through the streets and no more noted than if it were so much dung. That shows how common a thing is treasure in this thieves' Paradise. Think of the mighty hoard in gold dust, bar silver, plate, coin and jewels that must be hidden away in the house of that renegade Papist."

"Well, better there than divided up among the men, to be stolen from their quarters or fall into the hands of the best gamblers and set the rest by the ears, as our host pointed out last night," replied Fairfax. "I never gave it a thought before, but it must be a rare hard problem for pirates to discover what to do with their gold, when once 'tis won."

"Simple enough," declared Lord Mornington. "Buy a pardon for yourself and let the rest go hang. Misson and Caraccioli have taken the first step by getting the bulk of the plunder into their own hands. Besides the loot of that galleon now being gutted before your eyes, there's at least another half million sterling in Caraccioli's strong-room. Think of that, Mr. Fairfax—a million pounds! Better than even Lord Bellomont dreamed."

"When he and his colleagues fitted out Captain Kidd to prey on the pirates and capture their hoards, back in King William's time? I have read and heard that you held a share in that adventure, my lord."

"Don't whisper that in this place, Mr. Fairfax," frowned Mornington. "I've heard that there are one or two of Kidd's men here, and they think ill of the honest gentlemen who sent him out. Kidd bungled the business, like the fool he was, and deserved what he got. Now you and I, lieutenant, have our chance to succeed where he and Bellomont failed."

"How is that, my lord?" asked Fairfax politely.

"Why, like this. In the first place, how many of these canting French corsairs would you say there were in Libertatia?"

"Between three hundred and fifty and four hundred, sir."

"So I reckon them myself. Now there are likewise in this place some two hundred English and Dutch freebooters, stout rogues all, without a stiver or a sixpence to bless themselves with, since the French have had all the luck of late, and taken all the fat prizes. Under guard aboard the galleon or over in the dockyard yonder are your thirty recruits, the *Scarborough's* crew and the Portuguese prisoners, at least three hundred all told.

"All we have to do is to persuade those two hundred Englishmen and Dutch to fall on the guard, set our men free, join forces, beat the French and take the town. They can earn a pardon by that, and the King of Portugal will pay us handsomely for recovering his part of the treasure. As for the rest of the plunder, 'twill be no easy matter for any one else to prove his own and take away from us what we have recaptured. In a word, Lieutenant, our fortunes will be made."

He paused to watch the effect of this on Fairfax. The young man had scooped up a palmful of sand from the beach, and was watching it pour out in thin white streams between his fingers. When it was all gone, he looked expectantly up into Mornington's face, as if waiting for him to proceed.

Placing his hand on the subaltern's knee, the governor continued:

"Now, Mr. Fairfax, on what you do hinges the success of all. Your part will be to approach that gaunt, sour-faced rogue who was drilling the company of blackamoors in the Grande Place this morning. Do you know his name?"

"Amos Horn, late sergeant in the Buffs. Our regiment was on their left at Malplaquet." . .

"Does he know his trade?"

"He's fit to hold a halberd in the Foot Guards."

"Will his savages follow and fight for him, wherever he may lead them?"

"They'd storm their fathers' villages at his command," declared Fairfax. "Sergeant Horn is a wondrous leader of native troops. His Black Musketeers, as he calls them, worship his shoe buckles."

"He's the man we need to make our venture sure. Get in touch with Horn at once, Lieutenant, and promise him the Queen's pardon and a captain's commission in the company's service, if he'll bring his hundred Black Musketeers over to our side. That will be the first thing to attend to. Do you know where to find the sergeant?"

Fairfax nodded.

"Like all old soldiers, he is most methodical. At this time in the afternoon, he'll be smoking his churchwarden and sipping a tall glass of *bumboo,* in the taproom window at Fiddler's Green."

"Then will you go see him there now, Lieutenant?"

Instead of rising or acquiescing, Fairfax only scooped up another handful of sand and trickled it through his fingers. After he had done this for the third time, Lord Mornington could stand it no longer.

"What the deuce are you dabbling and waiting for? Can you arrange this business or can't you?"

"No, my lord," answered Fairfax with quiet finality. "I can have nothing to do with it."

"What the plague d'ye mean? Why can't you?"

"In the first place, my lord, because this sand is—dry."

"Dry?"

"Aye, good dry land. Did'st ever expect to feel it underfoot again, when the pumps stopped, only eight days ago? Have you forgotten who saved us then, my lord? Suppose you succeed in this enterprise, what will happen to our rescuer Captain Misson and his friend Caraccioli?"

"Why, they'll be hanged, of course, as they deserve. All fine words aside, they're nothing but pirates."

"And we, my lord, are their prisoners on parole. We have sworn, among other things, not to seduce any Libertatian from his allegiance to the republic——"

"Republic!" snorted the noble peer. "This double-dashed den of piccaroons, pirates and mutineers, who——"

"Quite so, my lord," agreed Fairfax, when Mornington had finished cursing. "They'll be hanged for their piracy and damned for their heresy, deservedly and beyond a doubt. Nevertheless, they've saved us from drowning—and an oath's an oath."

"Then wouldn't it be a kindness to save some of them from hanging—our own countrymen, too? Would you rather see Sergeant Amos Horn strung up as a pirate or pardoned and serving the company in India?"

"But I have no choice in the matter, sir. We are not only on parole but we are also Captain Misson's guests. I can't sit down at a man's table, my lord, eat his dinner, drink his health, and then go outside to plot against his life and liberty."

"But the fellow's an arrant pirate, the enemy of all mankind, *and* a Frenchman," argued Lord Mornington.

"Were he Titus Oates or Judas Iscariot, I wouldn't treat him so, my lord. Nor would I meddle with his men, if I were you, sir, lest they betray you instead of him."

"When I want your advice, sirrah, I'll ask for it!" growled the governor. "If this matter miscarries, I know who'll bear the blame for it at Madras."

"Why, nobody, my lord," answered Fairfax cheerfully. "For if you try to hang Misson and fail, he'll certainly hang every one of us."

"Stap me, but you're right!" admitted Lord Mornington with a grin. "You're an impudent young dog, and the man I need to manage this business for me. I can't go hob-nobbing with these pirate scum in their hedge-tavern, but you have a rare knack for doing it and keeping their respect withal. You're the one to win over Sergeant Horn and the other leaders among the English and Dutch. Do this, help us win the treasure, and I pledge you my private and particular word, which I'm too shrewd a politician to have broken yet, that your share will not be a farthing less than one hundred thousand pounds. You can go home to England forthwith, live like a lord, buy the colonelcy of any regiment, and die a general."

"And a perjured scoundrel," added Fairfax. "Thank you, my lord, but I prefer to remain as I am."

"You do, eh? You're willing to sail tamely out of here on the *Bom Jesus*, next week, and leave this treasure house to be plundered by the Portuguese fleet next monsoon?"

"I have given my word, sir."

"And I give you my word, sirrah," Lord Mornington countered savagely. "That if you disappoint me in this business, I'll settle yours! There's a moldy little fort in a vile fever swamp somewhere at the back of Madras. I've forgotten the cursed heathen name of the place, but they call it 'The *Sahibs'* Graveyard.' Three months is the longest time that any white officer or soldier has ever survived there. And there you'll go and there you'll stay, Mr. Fairfax, until you're dead or I'm no longer governor. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly, my lord, except for one thing."

"And what is that?"

"Why, under the circumstances, you are not afraid of my going straight to Captain Misson and telling him all."

"What, *you* turn traitor?" exclaimed Lord Mornington, with a great guffaw and a knowing grin which he swiftly wiped off and replaced with an excellent caricature of conventional horror. "Break your oath of allegiance to the Queen and the company, betray the governor and his lady and all your shipmates, to an atheist French pirate? How would you like that tale to be told in London and your native shire? Your father would curse the day you were born, your mother die of a broken heart, and your name go down in history together with those twin worthies you were prating of but a moment ago: Judas Iscariot and Titus Oates. Rather than that, you'll choose——"

"The fever fort."

"To keep your fair name and earn a hundred thousand pounds," concluded Mornington. "But turn pirate? Blacken your name in the county where your people have lived since Domesday Book? Not you!"

"I wonder, my lord, that you don't turn pirate yourself," retorted Fairfax. "You have a rare talent for it."

"Egad, if I did I'd be a real pirate and ply my trade in earnest!" cried Mornington frankly. "Not like this mawkish Jack-fool of a baby-faced Frenchman, with his brotherhoods and Utopias and laws against swearing and all. I'd sweep the seas and harry the coasts from Malabar to Peru, pile up enough plunder to buy me a pardon, and die rich and respected at the end of it, like Harry Morgan. Did'st ever hear of the trick he played at Chagres?"

"No, my lord."

"That was a rare ruse. After they had captured and plundered the city of Panama, in '71, Morgan led his buccaneers back across the Isthmus to Chagres, on the Caribbean. There they put all the booty into one heap before dividing it up. To make sure that no one held anything back, they divided themselves into companies, each of which appointed a searcher who ransacked the others most straitly, even to their shoes; after which, they all searched the searcher. Then Morgan had them place the treasure, for safekeeping overnight, on the largest and swiftest vessel of their fleet.

"When the morrow dawned, they saw her topsails disappearing over the rim of the world. Straight to London she sailed, with

Morgan aboard, to buy his pardon and knighthood from merry King Charles. When next those cozened rogues set eyes on their old commander, he was Sir Henry Morgan, Governor of Jamaica, and a stern suppresser and hanger of buccaneers.

"That's the way to rise in this world, young sir, and now you and I have our chance to spoil the Egyptians. Be off with you, speak to the sergeant and the rest of the rogues, and arrange for the uprising against the French."

FAIRFAX saluted, turned his back and walked away without wasting any more words. He knew that Lord Mornington meant exactly what he said. Either he must serve as the governor's catspaw or else go to the fort in the fever swamp to die. Such was the penalty he must pay for his unforgivable frankness on board the *Scarborough.*

What a cunning brute Mornington was! Utterly devoid of generosity or gratitude, yet he fully appreciated Fairfax's predicament as the son of a simple-hearted old English squire. A lord was a lord, a pirate was a pirate, and a Deist was an atheist at Fairfax Hall. Conventional morality was all on Mornington's side. For Fairfax to warn Misson would be to make Mornington a martyr and himself the most execrated man in all England.

"Mornington's friends would hire half Grub Street to blacken my name, as they did poor Captain Kidd's," he reflected as he turned into Victory Road. "I can't let them do that for the family's sake, but I'll be dashed if I'll do my lord's dirty work for any consideration. The more I see of the politicians, the better I like the pirates."

Fairfax and the Libertatians got on very well. Both as the squire's son in the village and the Queen's officer in Flanders, he had lived up to the old county saying that, "A Fairfax acts fair," and had flourished accordingly. He had learned a good deal about seamen and seamanship on the voyage out, and he found no great difference between the outlaws of Libertatia and the men he had known on the *Scarborough.* As compared with a garrison town in Flanders, on payday, or Saturday night on any waterfront in Christendom, this pirates' Paradise was milder than a sleepy English village on Sunday afternoon!

Unlike Port Royal in the roaring days of the buccaneers, it had no parasitic horde of gamblers, drabs and flash-house keepers to drain the sea-rover dry overnight and send him off penniless on another cruise. Every mess had its weekly portion of captured wine, rum and arrack, to be poured down or doled out thriftily as its members chose. Whoever wanted more to drink could go and get it at Fiddler's Green.

Fiddler's Green! Centuries after Libertatia was a lost city and a forgotten dream, in every fo'csle afloat they were still talking about Fiddler's Green, where good sailors go when they die. There your credit is always good, and never a reckoning to pay, but always a glass, a lass and a song. Today, it is somewhere east of the sun and west of the moon. But in those days, if you had trudged up Victory Road, in the dust of the creaking treasure carts, past five of the nine battered figureheads taken from captured ships and erected as trophies, you would have come to the gallows-like post and beam on the left hand side of the road, supporting the swaying sign of the jolly fiddler on the greenest of fields.

Here a clearing had been cut four-square out of the palm grove; a clearing planted with the coarse native grass, that was kept watered throughout the dry season, cut close with cutlas blades and rolled with a section sawn out of a galleon's mainmast, weighted with a box of grape-shot. Fiddler's Green had to be kept fit for the dancing.

For those who could foot it on a ship's deck but not on turf, there was plenty of calked planking in the long, twin pavilions, thatch-roofed and raised on piles, that stood on either side of the green. Between them, back of the barbecue pits where the beeves were roasted whole for the usual carousal before or after a cruise, stood a trim little Dutch ale house, complete from the wrought-iron foot scraper beside the double green door, to the weathercock above the stepped gable. Like the carts and the windmill, it had been shipped out in sections to Ceylon, but had fetched up instead at Fiddler's Green.

Framed in the open doorway stood "Sheer Hulk" the tavern keeper, once the ablest seaman in the fleet, but now the host and autocrat of Fiddler's Green. He had the face and bearing of a Lord Chief Justice, the loins and shoulders of Ajax—and no arms. Having lost them both in the same battle, he had been given command of Fiddler's

Green, and the services of a half-witted cabin boy. This youth, who never spoke or stirred from Sheer Hulk's side, was known as "Fingers."

As Fairfax walked by, he saw Fingers holding a burnished silver flagon and the mouth piece of a pipe alternately to Sheer Hulk's lips. Beside them, in his regular seat at the tap room window, sat Sergeant Horn, sipping a long glass of *bumboo* laced with claret. Fairfax caught the veteran's eye, acknowledged his salutation—and passed on.

Not until he had come to the end of Victory Road, at the corner of the Grande Place, did Fairfax pause, as he always did, before the figurehead that stood there like a statue. It was the well wrought likeness of a beautiful young woman, tall and stately, crowned with the battlemented mural crown indicating that this was the personification of a city. In every line and feature, she was proudly, unmistakably English. Beneath her sandaled feet were rudely carved in the curved timber that had once been the cutwater of a frigate the words: "*Aux braves Anglais.*" Above her head, the same hand had chiseled: "*La Winchelsea.*"

"You were lost and won in a fair fight," apostrophized Fairfax silently. "When we win you back, may the fight be no less fair."

## CHAPTER VI

### THE METHODS OF MISSON

TEN paces beyond the memorial brought Fairfax to the end of Victory Road and into the Grande Place. This was a dusty, treeless public square, the general market and assembly place of Libertatia. Before him, the ox carts were still unloading treasure, under the direction of Voix de Foudre, at the open door of Caraccioli's imposing dome-roofed house, which, with its flanking garden walls, took up the whole western side of the plaza. Misson's somewhat smaller dwelling in like manner occupied the northern side of the square.

Both were blank-faced Oriental palaces, as white and square and almost as featureless as two lumps of sugar. Their freshly whitewashed outer walls were broken in each case only by high-placed, narrow windows like arrow slots, and by a single horseshoe-arched central doorway. The entrance to Misson's house was wide enough for an ox cart to be driven in through the dark, vaulted tunnel to the sunlit inner court, whose flowers and fountain could be seen by every passer-by in the Grande Place, for Misson's gate was never closed.

Caraccioli, on the other hand, kept the narrow door to his house close shut, except at this time, when the carters were unloading treasure at his threshold. A double line of tall, white-turbaned Johannese retainers were lifting and passing the ingots hand to hand, keeping time with a rhythmic chant, as they kept the treasure steadily flowing into the house and around the corner of the dark, twisting corridor that gave no hint of what might lie beyond.

"There must be some sort of a masonry vault within," reflected Fairfax. "Or else this is the strangest treasure house in the world—a million pounds' worth of gold and silver kept in a basket."

The two impressive looking palaces were, indeed, nothing but baskets. Strips and splints of screw palm, deftly woven and plaited on a light rustic framework by the brown hands of the Johannese workmen sent by the sister princesses, formed the dome of one, and the inner and outer walls of both houses, covered by a thick whitewash of coral lime. Ship's planking supplied the floors, and tight-stretched muslin the ceiling cloths, in Misson's house, at least. Indian and Persian tapestries adorned the walls of its twenty or thirty rooms, and there was an abundance of *charpoys* or couches, though other furniture was at a premium.

Opposite Misson's house, the south side of the Grande Place was lined with flimsy booths and eating shacks, where turbaned negresses drove a thriving trade, cooking and selling the chickens and vegetables that their husbands raised. Libertatia was not entirely a sailors' town, for many of the liberated African slaves were born farmers, who had returned eagerly to the soil.

Back of Caraccioli's palace lay their quarter of thatched huts of a dozen East Coast tribal types, that contrasted picturesquely with the sail cloth tents, log cabins and board shacks of the Europeans. Beyond the African quarter stretched the broad communal fields of rice and Kaffir corn, native yams, and big Dutch cabbages, thorn-fenced against the wild hogs. Out on the open plain grazed three hundred head of hump-backed, black-and-white Madagascar cattle.

Another herd of these strange looking

long-horns came plodding down the trail from the interior and into the Grande Place from the southwest as Fairfax entered from the East. A thrill of excitement ran through the working party and the idlers about the square at the sight of the strange herdsmen driving in the cows.

"*Nom d'un nom*, they are Antankara!" exclaimed Voix de Foudre to Fairfax, as the Englishman dodged round the head of the herd and came over beside him. "The first of their nation that have ever ventured to visit us."

"Your outposts keep poor guard, then," criticized the soldier, "if a parcel of savages can drive a herd of cattle into your town in broad daylight before you know they are near."

Voix de Foudre smiled indulgently in his beard.

"Why should we keep watch to the landward, monsieur, when we are at peace with these people?"

"Wars have a way of starting suddenly. And these fellows look very warlike."

Big, black, swaggering savages, hardly a man of them under six feet, fifty Antankara warriors swung proudly into the market place of the white man's town. Striding superbly at their head came a gigantic young chief, blacker than ebony but thin-lipped and finely-featured. He was swathed to the ankles in a wonderful silken *lamba*, deep-fringed and many-striped, of green, red, orange, purple and white, all blended by exposure to the sun into one rich, barbaric harmony.

The *lambas* of his followers were also gaily striped but woven of cotton and narrowing in width with the diminishing importance of the owner, down to a mere breech clout. Behind the chief walked two squires carrying their master's weapons: A bundle of javelins and a bow and arrows. The javelins were nearly five feet long; light, flint-headed spears, fit for either throwing or thrusting. The bow was of about the same length and very loosely strung, with a quiverful of shafts, several of which had heads made out of nails or bits of scrap-iron.

Only the chief, apparently, could afford that imported luxury, for all the rest had flint-headed arrows only. Every warrior of the body guard, and every herdsman visible through the dust, down the flanks of the long herd, was either an archer or a javelin-man. None carried firearms, although the musket had long since driven out the bow among the southern Malagasy.

Halting his men in the middle of the Grande Place, the Antankara chief looked haughtily about him. His frown broke into a beaming smile as out of his house stepped Captain Misson. While the two were exchanging ceremonious greetings of great stateliness and length, the humpbacked cattle kept pouring in from the trail, to be rounded up in the square. Then, limping in behind the steers and cows, another sort of black cattle was prodded into the market place.

"Zounds!" cried Fairfax. "Selling their own flesh and blood!"

* * *

THEIR necks bent beneath the galling weight of the cruel Zanzibar slave yoke, their black skins gray with dust and crusted with sweat and blood from the javelin pricks that urged them on, forty men were driven in for sale. An equal number of women, unyoked, unbound, and practically unclothed, completed the lot.

Captain Misson bought them all, men, women and horned cattle, for twenty trade hatchets, a big iron pot, two bolts of scarlet baize, and three little kegs of beads. Looking well satisfied with the bargain, the Antankara made camp for the night around the great flag pole in the center of the Grande Place.

As soon as they had become his property, Misson ordered the male captives to be unyoked. As soon as each slave was freed, the captain turned him over to one of the older black members of the community.

"Take this man into your household," he directed, in the hybrid *patois* that was becoming the common speech of Libertatia; a blend of French, English, Dutch, Arabic, African and Malagasy words and phrases. "Feed him, care for him as a brother and instruct him in our ways."

"Aren't you afraid that they'll run away?" asked Fairfax.

"Where could they run to?" responded Misson. "Except to their former masters, the Antankara? These wretched people are Sakalava, captured in a recent southward raid. Now that the Antankara have found a profitable market for their prisoners, they will bring us more and more. Out of every slave we shall make a citizen and so increase the strength of our republic."

"And what will you do with the women?"

"Give them as wives to our young black seamen and shipwrights. These also were slaves, whom we rescued from the reeking hold of a Bristol slaver. We made citizens of them, together with their white owners. Taught by European ship carpenters, they built in our dockyard two fine large sloops, the *Enfance* and the *Liberté*."

"The two small vessels now under construction?" asked Fairfax.

"No, these are of a larger type, carrying eight swivel guns apiece. They are out cruising now, manned by English Libertatians, under the valiant Captain Tew."

"I've heard that commander's name spoken, once or twice, at Fiddler's Green," observed Fairfax, in whose mind an idea was beginning to take form. He fell into step with Misson and walked back with him across the Grande Place and through the archway into the courtyard, where they sat down on a bench near the fountain, to wile away the quarter of an hour before dinner.

"Captain Tew is an Englishman from Bermuda, I believe?"

Misson nodded.

"Thomas Tew is of the purest *type Anglais*, a flaxen-haired young giant, merry and bold; one who would cross the Atlantic in a cockleshell and with it attack a frigate like the *Victoire*.

"It was off the West Coast of Africa that we sighted a small armed sloop under English colors. I displayed the French ensign and made chase. But pursuit was hopeless. The sloop had the weather-gage and worked so well to windward that she could have spared the ship three points in the sheet and yet wronged her. We lost sight of the little craft after dark and I thought we had seen the last of her.

"But one of my men came aft with a word of warning:

" 'My captain,' he said, 'that fellow, by his rig, is a Bermudan privateer. I have served long enough in the West Indies to know the crafty tricks and boundless audacity of those islanders. The wind is falling fast; if it is calm tonight, then stand by for trouble at the change of watch.'

"Surely enough, just at the last stroke of eight bells, there being little or no wind and the *Victoire* almost motionless, out of the darkness under our bows appeared the Bermudan sloop. Her sails were furled and her crew were rowing her with long, well-muffled sweeps thrust out through the gun ports. Lashing our dolphin striker to their bowsprit, the Bermuda men laid us aboard.

"On the *Victoire's* deck, all seemed tumult and disorder, with great trampling and shouting, such as often occurs at the change of watch. The privateersmen had hoped to profit by this customary confusion, and to carry the ship before we could spring to arms.

"But instead, as each Englishman came over our bows, he was seized, disarmed, and tumbled down the fore hatch, to be swiftly bound and gagged. We had bundled up half of them before the rest discovered the trap and tried to shove off. Before they could cut the lashings, we boarded in our turn and captured the sloop. Not one of the privateersmen was killed, few hurt, and only one Frenchman wounded.

"Next morning I sent for their captain, discovered his name to be Thomas Tew, complimented him on his courage and examined his commission. He had been sent out by the Governor of Bermuda, who owned much stock in the Royal African Company, to attack the rival French factory at Goree. It was a purely private enterprize, a sordid commercial throat-cutting under color of war, for which Tew and his men had little zeal. When I told him what sort of men we were, he clapped his hand on the cabin table and cried—

" 'A gold chain or a wooden leg! I'm with you!' "

"This Captain Tew is the only English skipper who has joined you so far, isn't he?" inquired Fairfax.

"Alas, yes. The other two we fell in with were both killed in action and buried with honor afterward."

"I'd rather like to meet this bold gentleman from Bermuda," continued Fairfax. "Will he be back from his cruise before we leave for Goa?"

"I fear not, for you are to sail next week, and we are not expecting him for a month yet."

Fairfax saw his duty clear. He would report to Lord Mornington what was probably the absolute truth, namely, that any successful uprising of the English at Libertatia could be led only by Captain Tew. Then he himself would go to Madras and—obey orders. That was the only decent way out of the business.

If there were only some way out for Captain Misson! The more he saw of the gentle, generous little Frenchman, the more Fairfax dreaded the thought of the inevitable end.

"Captain Misson," he said impulsively, "why don't you sue for pardon and make terms while yet you have time? This little republic of yours has flourished bravely so far, but it can't last much longer."

"Why not? Rome was once a smaller and a weaker city."

"Rome," said the Englishman grimly, "didn't have to deal with the British Navy."

"My friend," smiled Misson, "if I had only the British Navy to deal with, I should be much more frightened than I am."

"I'm afraid I don't quite understand," declared Fairfax.

"Consider the rovers of Algiers and Tripoli, those Moslem corsairs that I have seen harrying the coast of Italy," expounded Misson. "In like manner, they have harried Cornwall, Ireland, and Sicily, capturing the ships, enslaving the subjects, and extorting tribute from the rulers of every nation in Europe. Why have the kings of Europe suffered these outrages for centuries, instead of sending their united fleets to sink the puny squadrons and batter down the forts of the Barbary Coast? Simply because each so-called Christian ruler prefers to help himself and hurt his neighbor by bribing and bargaining with the Deys of Tripoli and Algiers.

"As it is in the Mediterranean, so it will be in the Indian Ocean. Consider how savagely England, France, Portugal and Holland are struggling for India and the Spice Islands; behold Libertatia, that rising young naval power, that potential ally, that convenient weapon for stabbing your rival in the back. As soon as the chancelries of Europe begin to appreciate our possibilities, our future is assured."

"Forsooth, I never thought of that!" exclaimed Fairfax. "You may live to create a nation after all."

"We have already done so," answered Misson proudly. "My friend, will you not join us?"

Fairfax shook his head.

"I am an Englishman and a Churchman and the sworn servant of the Honorable East India Company. A year from my release, I shall be your enemy. But then, and now, and forevermore, Captain Misson, I will always be your friend."

## CHAPTER VII

### THE GUNJ SUWAIE

*BR-R-ROOM! Boom-boom! Boom!* Fairfax dreamed that night that he was back in the trenches before Lille, with countless *coehoorns* and culverins, heavy siege guns and ponderous twelve-inch mortars thundering away around the long circuit of Marlborough's besieging batteries, while the cannon of France roared back defiance from the battered bastions and ramparts of the beleagured city.

Then the vision vanished, and he found himself staring up at the flickering wrinkle that told where a snake was writhing its way across the upper side of the whitewashed ceiling-cloth of his bed-room in Misson's house. The rays of the rising sun streamed slantwise in through the narrow, unglazed southern windows, to bring out the time-mellowed colors of the Persian tapestry on the western wall, and the striking contrast between the lobster-red face and wig-bleached bald scalp of his still sleeping room-mate, Captain Parker.

"A peaceful scene," mused Fairfax. "Now what made me dream so vividly of Flanders? It must have been the trumpeting of the skipper's snores."

*Boom! Boom! Boom!* came the answer, rolling heavily in from seaward.

Parker's eyes flew open, and his round, red face rose from the pillow like the fog clearing a cloud bank.

"The forts are firing!" he croaked hoarsely, as he jumped out of bed and into his breeches. "A fleet is forcing the harbor-mouth!"

"Warm work, by the sound," commented Fairfax, as he hurried into his own clothes. "I'll warrant they're English!"

"Portygees from Goa, more likely," contradicted the captain. "To my certain knowledge, there's not a Queen's ship East of the Cape. Hark to the savages howling and the rogues a-scampering past outside!"

Their room faced the Grande Place, but the windows were placed too high for anything except a giraffe to look through. Plainly audible, however, between the excited yells of the Antankara visitors, was the sound of hundreds of flying feet pounding past through the crunching sand.

"At least they're all running in the right direction," said Fairfax, listening attentively. "Down to the water front. Let's after them."

Buckling their sword belts and tying their cravats as they hurried along, the two British officers hastened out into the arcaded courtyard, through the palace gate and down Victory Road to the beach. They found the Antankara doing a war dance on the pier, while the strand was swarming with excited Libertatians of all colors, lightly clad but heavily armed, shoving off in boat loads to man the *Victoire*, the *Bijoux* and the big fifty-gun Portuguese ship, rechristened the *République*.

"Too late!" whispered Captain Parker to Fairfax. "Look! The van-ship has won through!"

Out of the powder-fog that filled the narrow entrance and hid the forts from view loomed the towering top-hamper of a mighty ship. As her blunt bows broke into view, Fairfax gasped with astonishment at the huge size of her. She was bigger than the biggest battleship in the Channel Fleet and armed in proportion to her bulk. She had three complete gun decks, tier above tier of open ports, mounting more than a hundred guns. The three pirate frigates together would make only three little mouthfuls for such a leviathan.

"A ship-of-the-line!" cried Fairfax.

"Nothing of the kind," growled Parker, all the joy dying out of his face. "Look at the Eastern rig and build of her. She's a ship of the Grand Mogul's and the rogues have captured her! There'll be the deuce to pay in Delhi when the emperor learns his loss."

"By heaven, you're right! There's the Libertatian flag flying above the crescent. They're only firing salutes—and well they may for such a victory. See what they captured that monster with!"

Out of the smoke and into the harbor sailed a brace of saucy little sloops, mounting eight brass pop-guns apiece; the tops of their masts barely reaching the height of the Moslem's rail.

"*Vive L'Enfance!*" shouted the French Libertatians, afloat and ashore. "*Vive La Liberté!*"

"How in the name of miracles," marveled Fairfax, "could those two tiny sloops have taken that great ship?"

"Because, sir," answered Captain Parker proudly, "they were manned by English seamen. Hark to that cheer!"

An unmistakeable "Hurrah!" went up from the sloops, and brought an answering roar from every British buccaneer on the beach.

"Hurrah for Tew!" they bellowed. "Tom Tew! Captain Tew forever!"

⁂

THEY heard the story of the capture that night from Tew's own lips. The young Bermudan was the guest of honor at Misson's table, together with Lord Mornington, Dom Pedro, Captain Parker and Lieutenant Fairfax. Like all the meals they had eaten in Misson's banquet hall, it was a purely masculine function.

Aesa, Princess of Johanna, was a thoroughly Oriental hostess. Fairfax had never set eyes on her. She dwelt in a separate quarter of the palace, into which Lady Fairfax and Lucy had likewise disappeared on the day of their arrival. How the three were getting on together was not revealed. Fairfax imagined their spending the days sitting on cushions and having a feminine orgy of eating sweets and looking at clothes and jewels. He knew that Lord Mornington saw his wife every day and seemed perfectly satisfied with the way she was being treated. Undoubtedly the women's quarters in the palace were the safest place for her and Lucy, particularly since every Englishman in town was celebrating Tew's victory by getting most gloriously drunk.

Tew himself had drained cup for cup with the rest of them all day, but the only apparent effect was to loosen his tongue. Despite the presence of four men who might later turn up as witnesses for the Crown, if ever he found himself in the dock at the Old Bailey, Tew described his crowning feat of piracy with the most engaging frankness.

"'Twas off the coast of Arabia Felix that we overhauled this tall ship of the Great Mogul's and resolved to take her for a prize. We fired a round-shot into her for a challenge. She answered with four or five guns, but so confusedly that we saw that her people understood their business very ill. The wind was light, so we ran out our sweeps and rowed the sloops up under her stern.

"When we were within easy musket shot, I ordered the starboard oars to back water, till we brought our guns to bear. Each sloop then poured a broadside of grape and partridge-shot in through the stern windows of the great cabin, and swept the heathen's quarter deck with a volley of small-arms. The Moslems stood so thick there that we killed a great many of them. The rest fired off their stern chasers to no effect, and even some of the broadside guns, although these did not bear at all.

"Perceiving from this that our foes were frightened out of their wits, we made no more ado but clapped them aboard on each quarter, swarmed overside, cleared the quarter deck, poop and poop royal, lined the barricade and fired a volley of musketry into the turbaned throng in the waist. Some were slain and the rest fled the deck to seek shelter below. We clapped on the hatches and made the great hulk our prize.

"She was bound from Bombay to Jiddah, with pilgrims for Mekka, who with the merchants, soldiers, mariners and their wives, made up not less than sixteen hundred souls. She mounted a hundred and ten guns, but her batteries were so cumbered with bales of silks, shawls, carpets, and the like that 'twas almost impossible to serve the pieces. This circumstance, together with the small skill and plentiful cowardice of her captain and crew, made it possible for a hundred of us to board and take this huge sea-castle without our losing a man.

"She is call the *Gunj Suwaie* or *Exceeding Treasure*, and in truth she is well named. We found her lading beyond all value or computation. Rich silks and rare spices, wrought and bar gold, chest on chest of rupees, pagodas, fanams, xeraphims, laris, juttals, matts, reis, rials, crusadoes, sequins, moidores and good English guineas besides a vast store of rubies, pearls and diamonds—such was our plunder. Never was ship so richly laden since man first sailed the seas.

"Being within sight of land, I set twelve hundred of the prisoners ashore on the beach, betwixt Ain and Aden, to make the best of their way to Mekka. Then we squared away for Libertatia."

"And what, may I ask, became of the other four hundred prisoners?" inquired Lord Mornington. "Have they joined your Brotherhood?"

"B-brotherhood! Ho! Ho! Ho!" roared Tew, pounding the table with his silver flagon and laughing with all the strength of his lungs.

"The other four hundred prisoners," explained Misson seriously, "are ladies of India, who were kept aboard after their husbands had been set ashore. Such forcible detention of any person of either sex is repugnant to the principles of Libertatia, and greatly to be deplored. I must admit, however, that the blame is largely mine."

"You kept telling me we needed wives," declared Tew. " 'Can't run a republic on bachelors,' said you, time and again. You told me we needed wives, so I went out and got 'em. Marry 'em all off tomorrow in the market place."

"Having deprived them of their former husbands, we shall provide them with others," explained Misson. "To prevent ill feeling among the bachelors over the matter of choice, there will be a public drawing of lots tomorrow morning in the Grande Place."

"There'll be ill feeling enough in Delhi, when those hapless husbands come back from their pilgrimage and tell their woes to the Grand Mogul," said Lord Mornington seriously. "And because they were plundered by Englishmen, the emperor's wrath will certainly fall on us at Madras and Bombay. The East India Company will suffer for your prank, Captain Tew, and seek redress and protection from the Crown. You have made yourself a powerful enemy at court."

"So it would seem," answered Tew, with a fine air of indifference that was drawn a little too fine. "But 'tis a long way from London to Libertatia."

"Why, so it is," agreed Mornington. "Or from London to—Jamaica. You come from that island, I believe?"

"No, from Bermuda."

"I cry your pardon. I was thinking of another gentleman from the West Indies—one Harry Morgan. Perhaps you have heard of him?"

"Aye, that I have!"

Forty-two years had passed since the sack of Panama and the betrayal at Chagres, but Morgan's exploits were still vividly remembered throughout the West Indies. In France, however, there had been three or four wars, and several other things to think about. Looking to see what effect Morgan's name would have on Misson, Fairfax saw him turn to Dom Pedro Fonseca and heard him ask the other's opinion of a point of seamanship in Camoen's "Lusiad." Soon the two were cantos deep in the Portuguese national epic, leaving Mornington free to drop broader and broader hints to the increasingly interested Thomas Tew.

"So you've heard of Sir Henry Morgan?"

"Who hasn't. But—that was before our time, my lord."

The title slipped out unconsciously. Up to now, Tew had been ostentatiously democratic and Libertatian.

"True," admitted Lord Mornington. "It was in my father's time, I remember, for 'twas he who managed Captain Morgan's affairs at Whitehall and brought them to so happy a conclusion."

"Ah, but those were the good old days of merry King Charles! The world has changed since then, my lord," sighed Tew regretfully.

"It may change back again, ere long."

"How can that be?" demanded the eager Tew.

"Her gracious majesty," pronounced Lord Mornington, bowing his head deeply, "enjoys but indifferent health. She weakens perceptibly from month to month. The end of her reign draws near, but who is to succeed? Some say the Elector of Hanover, others——"

"The Pretend— I mean, King James?"

My lord said nothing. Only, as the other spoke, he lifted his wine glass a trifle higher and drank a shade more ceremoniously than usual. No one could swear that he had toasted the king over the water and the restoration of the Stuarts, but there was no mistaking the effect of this bit of pantomime on his audience. All that Tew needed was a hint, and he took it as a trout takes the hook. With quivering nostrils and shining eyes, he waited for Mornington's next move and word.

"Very fine old port," said my lord approvingly. "I'll warrant it had rounded the Cape at least twice before it had the misfortune to fall in with Captain Misson. Now I suppose the *Gunj Suwaie*, being a Moslem craft, would have no wine aboard, but doubtless plenty of coffee?"

"Tons of it," said Tew impatiently.

He would have doubled back to politics, but Mornington headed him off.

"Not the true Mocha, with the rare flavor that they say we never know in Europe? I've long wished for a taste of that."

It was Tew's night for taking hints.

"Come aboard with me now, my lord, and I'll have old Ibrahim brew us a potful. You can have your pick of the cabins and go ashore with me tomorrow, when we land the brides."

"May I accept Captain Tew's invitation?" inquired Mornington of his host and captor. "Is it permitted me to venture so far from town?"

"But certainly," smiled Misson. "Unless Lady Mornington has heard of the four hundred *houris*."

Mornington joined the laugh as heartily as any one else. Fairfax had heard him laugh that way before, when he had won at cards on the voyage out. My lord, he reflected, now held a winning hand. That trusting innocent Misson was letting him go aboard Tew's ship! Fairfax could see the pair of them sipping their Mocha in the cabin, while Mornington told Jacobite fairy tales to that other innocent, Tew.

My lord was no more a Jacobite than he was a Hanoverian; no more a Tory than a Whig. He was a statesman for revenue only. But to do him justice, Mornington's political morality was not much below the mean level of the age. Nor was he necessarily deceiving the trusting pirate. Bribery in high places was so common, public opinion so negligible, and the rival claimants to the throne so evenly deadlocked beside the deathbed of the childless queen, that Mornington, given the gold of Libertatia to draw on, might very conceivably play the king maker.

Already he had Tew dreaming gorgeous dreams of a Stuart restoration, with a pardon and a peerage for the king maker's financial backer. Misson, engrossed in poetry and trusting the pledged word of the man he had saved from drowning, noticed nothing and thought no evil.

Only Fairfax suspected what was afoot as Tew and Mornington left the hall.

"Captain Tew will hear much about the handsome way my lord's father served Captain Morgan," reflected the subaltern, "but nothing about the scurvy way my lord himself served Captain Kidd."

## CHAPTER VIII

### IN THE GRANDE PLACE

"*MALACHI DRURY!*"

A leathery old walrus of a British buccaneer, who had sailed with Ringrose, Dampier and Kidd, limped across the burning sands of the Grande Place to where a tall vase of Benares brassware gleamed on an up-turned rum keg. A blindfolded cabin boy, stationed there for the purpose, reached down into the vase, drew out a spade guinea and dropped it into Malachi's upturned palm. Of course, it fell face-downward. Turning it over, Malachi beheld the hard-featured profile of King William the Third.

"That for you, you ——!" he snorted, as he slammed the gold piece into the dust and drowned the Protestant hero of the glorious revolution in a flood of tobacco juice.

Any further remarks that Malachi might have made on the subject were lost in the yell of laughter from the crowd. Every bachelor in Libertatia was there, squatting or standing with his mates in a great semicircle facing the jar of guineas on the rum barrel. Back of the blindfolded cabin boy stood Captain Misson and Captain Van Ghent, the taciturn chief of the Hollanders, with a French, a Dutch and an English quartermaster to call and check off the names.

"Klaus Adriaanzoon!"

A lean, hatchet-faced Zuylander strode stiffly forward to try his luck and found it no better than Malachi's. He also received a King William guinea which, however he dropped thriftly into his pocket. He glanced at the other gold piece lying on the ground and decided that it was too dirty to pick up in public.

"Lazare Sartine!"

Gallantly swaggering in silken breeches, a dandified young French *flibustier* stepped up, received his guinea and found it stamped with the buxom features of good Queen Anne.

"*Vive la Reine!*" exulted Lazare Sartine. "*Vive l'amour!*"

Twirling his long black mustaches and followed by a roar of broad jests and unprintable congratulations, he entered the roped-off space reserved for bridegrooms.

"Thought they weren't to begin the drawing until after Tew had brought the wenches ashore," remarked Captain Parker to Lieutenant Fairfax, as they stood together with the other paroled officers, watching the scene in the Grande Place, no longer occupied by the visiting Antankara, now on their way home. A place had been reserved for them to look on from the cool, shaded archway of Misson's house.

"He is overdue now, and Captain Misson feared to wait longer, lest the wedding feast be roasted to cinders. Tew and his lads will suffer no hurt by the other's commencing now, for there's a token for every unmarried man in that vase: Four hundred Queen's guineas for the lucky ones, and two hundred and seventeen of Dutch William's for the luckless."

"That means two hundred and seventeen angy bachelors today and sundry widows tomorrow," prophesied Parker cheerfully.

"Here comes Tew at last," said Fairfax presently. "With the rest of his men. But where are the women?"

There was no sign of the captured harem as Tom Tew, with a score of hard-bitten Bermuda privateersmen at his heels, strode aggressively into the square. The absence of the women, together with the set of Tew's shoulders and the sullen frown on his face, was enough to tell Fairfax that when that pot of coffee was being consumed the night before, trouble had been brewed for Libertatia.

Chilling the holiday atmosphere as he came, Tew crossed the Grande Place to where Misson stood awaiting him. It was too far for the watchers under the arch to overhear what the Bermudan said, but they all could see Misson start and stiffen with pained surprize, while Tew glared down at him and pounded out the points of his argument by slamming the back of his clenched right hand into his open left.

Fairfax could not make out a word of what Tew was saying, but the French quartermaster, standing by, evidently knew enough English to catch his drift and did not like it at all. Quitting his post, he rushed over to where his compatriots were thickest and delivered an impassioned translation with eloquent gestures.

His shipmates reacted with a resounding yell of righteous indignation. More Frenchmen hurried over from every direction, pushing their way through the crowd. One of them had the bad manners and poor judgment to jab his elbow into old Malachi Drury, who promptly picked him up by the throat, and crotch and heaved him over his head. As he toppled over, his flailing bare heel mule-kicked a bystander so hard that it sent him staggering against the rum barrel and upset it, vase, guineas and all.

"Cupid" the cabin boy jerked off his blindfold and dropped down on his hands and knees to pick up the gold pieces rolling unheeded among the trampling feet of the angry men now milling about in what was rapidly becoming a battle-royal.

"*Perfides Anglais!*" shouted the Frenchmen. "*A bas les menteurs!*"

"What's that?" inquired Captain Parker, without taking his eyes off the riot. Somewhat to his surprize, his room-mate answered—

"A musket shot."

"What the plague d'ye mean?" demanded the sea captain.

"Why, that some one has just fired a service musket down by the dockyard. Didn't you hear it?"

"Zounds, no! Mean to say that you caught the crack of a firelock half a mile to windward through all this cursed din?"

"I know Brown Bess's voice. That was a British army musket, and the only small-arms of that sort here are those of Horn's Black Musketeers, who are mounting guard at the dockyard prison pen, while the whites keep holiday. Holiday for the prisoners too, you told me."

Parker nodded. He had taken his customary stroll down to the shore that morning, to see how the work was coming along on the *Bom Jesus*, and found it at a standstill. The galleon was riding, silent and deserted, at her anchorage off the shipyard, where the captive seamen and recruits seemed to be taking their ease in quarters, so far as Parker could judge by the sounds that drifted over the high stockade.

Just what went on inside there was a tantalizing mystery to him and the other paroled officers, because the sentries on the wall always warned them off when they came within easy earshot. But at this time Parker was more interested in the riot raging in the Grande Place than in that might be happening down at the shipyard.

"Naught to fret about," he said impatiently. "Horn's in charge there, and he's an Englishman who'll never murder any of our people. Shot a Portygee, if anything. Call it that for the nonce, Mr. Fairfax, and tell me what the——"

*Crack!* went a pistol-shot, somewhere in the mêlée. Missing whomever it was meant for, the bullet kicked up a spurt of sand directly between Dom Pedro Fonseca's high-heeled shoes. Still maintaining his melancholy dignity but with less languor than usual, Dom Pedro withdrew into the palace. So did everybody else in the archway, except Fairfax and Parker.

"Zanies!" snorted the sea captain, "Hiding in a hamper! Palm-leaves and plaster never stopped bullets yet. Might as well stay on deck and watch the rogues a-cutting each other's throats."

"More fisticuffs than throat cutting and more words than blows, so far," replied the subaltern. "Brawling over the women, I suppose. Lord, what a dust they are kicking up!"

The light, powdery volcanic soil hung in the air like a haze, half hiding the scuffling, swaying mass of men in the middle of the square. There were no more pistol shots, and only an occasional gleam and clash of steel, during the next two minutes.

Then past the front of the palace and into the archway plunged Lord Mornington. Leaning one hand against the wall, he pressed the other to his side, as he panted and gasped for breath. His chest was heaving, his fine lawn shirt was saturated and his face streaming with sweat, his great full-bottomed periwig was all awry and one of its long horsehair curls dangling by a single hair.

"A narrow escape, my lord," said Fairfax, touching the half-clipped curl. "So it was you they fired at down by the dock-yard."

Too short of breath to say a word, after his half mile run, Mornington nodded. As he looked at the fighting going on before him he showed no surprize. Instead, his lips curved and eyes gleamed with vindictive triumph.

"Now's the time!" he gasped to Fairfax. "Go tell—French—murdering English."

"Tell whom, my lord?"

"Sergeant Horn, at the dockyard. Had no chance to tell him myself. Knew this affray—was coming—so went to the yard—soon as came ashore. Cursed black ape of a sentry blazed away—three more bobbed up and menaced me with their firelocks—till I turned back. Saw no sign of Horn—inside somewhere—but he'll be on the alert now. Ha! That'll rouse him!"

Two pistol shots, followed closely by a third, rang out somewhere near the center of the crowd, which immediately began to break up and move apart. Out of the dust cloud came a scattered group of men, running toward the northward side of Victory Road, where lay the French quarter, and shouting:

*"Aux armes, les Français! Aux armes!"*

"Hear that?" demanded Lord Mornington. "They're going for their arms to slaughter us with. As you love your life and ours, Lieutenant, speed to the dockyard gate and tell Sergeant Horn that war has broken out in camp betwixt the English and French. Offer him the queen's pardon —anything—if he'll free the prisoners and join us with the Black Musketeers."

"But, my lord——"

"They'll never fire at you—they'll present arms and turn out the guard instead. They've seen Horn salute and kotow to you ever since we came. I'm only a dashed civilian to him, but you're Lord Marlborough and all. You can lead him as he leads his blacks—by the nose. Quick! What are you waiting for?"

"My oath——"

"'To seduce no Libertatian from his allegiance to the republic'? There isn't any more republic! I've split it asunder—turned Tew against Misson——"

"You have, my lord?"

"Look there!" cried Mornington, pointing across the square. "See for yourself."

THE Grande Place was no longer occupied by a crowd but by two crowds, facing each other like hostile armies. On the south, with their backs to the vegetable stands, and eating booths, stood Tew and nearly two hundred English, with half as many Hollanders under Van Ghent on their right. Massed over against them, in front of Misson's house, were at least three hundred and fifty Frenchmen, while others were running up from the seaward with armfuls of pikes and muskets. The same thing was going on across the way. Both sides were deliberately arming and arraying themselves for battle.

It looked as if it were going to be Flanders all over again, with the British and Dutch allied against the French. But now the odds were against the allies. More numerous and better unified and disciplined, the French would almost certainly win the day—unless Fairfax should intervene as Mornington urged.

Fairfax visualized the possibilities in a swift series of vivid scenes. He saw himself nipping round the corner of the palace and speeding diagonally down through the palm grove to the shore. He could see the honest English wrath on Amos Horn's face, as he hearkened to the news that would by then be corroborated by the crash and rattle of musketry from the Grande Place. He could see the prison pen gates swinging wide, the Black Musketeers handing over thirty of their firelocks to arm his own recruits, while the English and Portuguese seamen were snatching up broad axes, handspikes and anything else handy in the shipyard.

He could see himself leading the whole united force, four hundred strong, in a swift, silent dash up through the deserted French quarter, to burst out into the Grande Place and fall irresistibly on Misson's flank and rear. He saw Queen Anne and the King of Portugal pinning orders of knighthood on his breast, while John Company and the Grand Mogul poured out sacks of gold at his feet, against a background of cheering villagers and the illuminated windows of Fairfax Hall.

Reading the young man's thoughts, Lord Mornington pressed him shrewdly.

"'Tis perfectly honorable. How can you seduce Horn's loyalty to the republic when there's no republic left for him to be loyal to and, consequently, no oath for you to break? And how about your own sworn loyalty to the company and the Queen? Will you stand idly by and watch the French slaughter your fellow countrymen?"

"*I* have never done so yet, my lord," answered Fairfax meaningly, as they watched the opposing forces now begin to surge forward and move against each other. "As soon as the battle is joined, I will decide and act. Till then, I will not stir."

A flickering shadow on the sand between the advancing lines caught his attention, as a trifling detail will at such a time. It was the shadow of the flag still flying from the tall staff in the center of the Grande Place: The shadow of a forgotten dream of liberty and the brotherhood of man.

And then, as the battle lines surged silently forward, the voice of the dreamer spoke:

"Peace! Peace! *Pro Deo et Libertate!*"

Majestic, deep-toned and far-resounding, it rolled like the peal of a great bell through the startled square. Every ear heard it; every eye turned to the speaker.

Out of the door beneath the dome came four tall green-turbaned Johannese carrying a litter. Shoulder-high they bore it into the narrowing space between the hostile hosts.

On the litter, his body covered with a sheet, his shoulders propped up against a pile of cushions, reclined a huge man with a huge black beard and a deep bass voice that intoned reproachfully:

"Would you slay one another, my brethren?"

"Caraccioli!" they shouted. "Caraccioli!"

Throwing out his arms, he turned his head and looked beseechingly to the right and left, beckoning them to draw nigh. Misson, in front of the French, was the first man to sheathe his sword and spring forward to grasp Caraccioli's hand. Before he had reached the litter, many were quitting the ranks on both sides. Before Lord Mornington could rap out more than a dozen oaths and a brace of blasphemies, the two mobs were again one crowd, clamoring about the bedside of Caraccioli.

He signed for silence and at length obtained it.

"Let the captains tell me," he directed. "Since he was the first to come, let Misson be the first to speak—then Tew."

What followed, Fairfax could not hear, for although Caraccioli's tremendous tones carried easily to the farthest corner of the Grande Place, Misson's and Tew's were, at that distance, inaudible. When they had finished, however, Caraccioli summed up. He spoke in fluent French, with a strong Romagnole accent, and paused at the end of every sentence for Misson and Van Ghent to repeat it in English and Dutch.

"This, then, is the quarrel: Captain Tew refuses to give up any of his plunder or prisoners to Captain Misson's crew, except in return for the command of the *Victoire*. This being refused, he appeals to arms and the ancient hatreds of Europe.

"But, my brethren, if you fight it out, then Libertatia is doomed. Weakened by civil war, she will fall an easy victim to her enemies. Surely we can settle this in a better way."

"Let Caraccioli judge between us!" shouted a Frenchman.

This proposition brought a roar of affirmation from his side and an equally vigorous negation from the other. Fists, knives and cutlases were brandished in the air all round the litter, that swayed perilously above the heads of the excited throng. Time and again it was nearly overturned. But somehow the bearers managed to keep their feet, until at last the crowd had yelled itself hoarse and Caraccioli could again make himself heard.

"It is not for me to judge. I am only a simple citizen of the republic. Every citizen, not only every man here but also every other who is now in the fields or fishing or on guard, has an equal right to say what shall be done."

This met with approval in a hearty, trilingual howl. The two hostile mobs were melting into a single audience in the hands of a skillful speaker.

"And every citizen, too, has an equal right to speak and be heard. But how can anybody make himself heard, if we all speak at once? Why, even *I* can't do it!"

This simple jest tickled and relaxed their tense-strung nerves. He had them laughing; the rest was easy.

"Brethren and fellow citizens, it is with us today in Libertatia as it was in the early days of Rome. Here we have the assembly of all the citizens: The *Comitia Curiata*, grown too numerous for the discussion and transaction of public affairs. Yet we have not yet reached the stage where we must needs divide ourselves, for purposes of voting, into groups of one hundred, as did the ancient Romans in their *Comitia Centuriata*. Let us rather establish something between—a *Comitia Decuriata*.

"Here is my humble suggestion: Let us divide ourselves into groups of ten. Let each group elect a spokesman or deputy. Let these deputies meet and make laws for our government. Let us postpone the matter of the marriages and the command of the *Victoire* and all other public problems for their deliberation and decision. What say you, brethren?"

The French applauded at once; the English and Dutch as soon as the linguists could expound the matter. The dazzling novelty of the idea, in an age when popular self-government was all but extinct, appealed to all.

They cheered Caraccioli back to his house in triumph, where he dismissed them with a brief prayer and a resounding quotation from the Vulgate: "*Ecce quam bonum et quam jocundum, habitare fratres in unum.*" Then, gathering in groups of ten, they straightway proceeded to elect their representatives.

Lord Mornington, realizing that his opportunity had slipped away, stamped off to his quarters, with a black look at Fairfax. The subaltern, however, failed to see it, for he was busy explaining current events to the bewildered Captain Parker.

"Thank Fortune, we're due to sail next week!" ejaculated the scandalized British skipper. "A pirate parliament! Who ever heard the like this side o' Bedlam?"

## CHAPTER IX

### THE RIGHT OF CHOICE

"SENHOR CAPITAO MISSON!" exclaimed Dom Pedro Fonseca reproachfully. "You have given me back my ship, you have given me back my freedom, but why have you not given me back my crew?"

"And mine too?" echoed Captain Parker.

A week had passed since the averted battle and impromptu election in the Grande Place, and the day had come when Misson's guests were to sail away from Libertatia. But as they were bidding him farewell and cordially pressing his hand in the courtyard of the palace, while the luggage was being loaded into a string of waiting ox carts, and parting gifts and compliments were being exchanged, into this amicable scene burst the two sea captains, who had gone down an hour earlier to the shore.

"We've just been aboard the *Bom Jesus*," declared Captain Parker. "She's well found and in very good order: leaks staunched, sails bent and all ataunto, as promised. But save for my twoscore Lascars, there's never a seaman on board, nor any of Lieutenant Fairfax's soldiers, either."

"What the plague?" demanded Lord Mornington. "No sailors? How in fiends and fury can we sail to Bombay without a crew?"

"I *knew* there would be some base deception!" murmured Lady Mornington, sinking limply against the canopy of the cushioned ox cart into which her husband had just assisted her.

The whole group of Portuguese and English officers and passengers stared resentfully at the little Libertatian chief, who replied with unruffled calm:

"My friends, it is very simple. You have forty East Indian seamen, a superfluity of officers, and at least thirty-five or forty able-bodied men among the passengers. Surely that many should suffice to sail the galleon to Bombay."

"*My* ship is returning to Goa, senhores," said the Portuguese captain significantly. "But why are my men still detained ashore? Were we not promised yesterday that today we might all go free after taking the oath not to serve against Libertatia for a year? Have we not all sworn to and signed that solemn declaration?"

"All the cabin party have done so without exception," answered Misson. "But you may remember, my friends, that there was an alternative which afforded you some little merriment at the time. You were given the choice of signing either that oath or the Book of the Brotherhood. Exactly the same choice was being offered at the same time to your men—with exactly opposite results."

"What's that?" cried Mornington. "D'ye mean to say our men have all turned pirates?"

"No, my lord," replied Misson. "They have all turned Libertatians."

Followed a long, shocked silence, broken only by the rattle of hammers and rasp of saws from the half-built Parliament House across the square. Those sounds were plainly audible in the palace patio, where nobody had a word to say. Everybody blinked and thought in a daze.

Captain Parker wondered why it was you couldn't find Lascars with a white man's guts or white men with a Lascar's dog-like loyalty to the "Kumpani." Dom Pedro crossed himself and looked more melancholy than ever as he thought of the lost souls of all his crew, fallen into heresy and doomed to eternal fire.

Fairfax, on the contrary, nearly burst into hysterical laughter. What idiots Lord Mornington and he had been, not to realize that the Libertatians would be winning over their men far faster than they could win over any of the Libertatians. Of course, that was what had been going on inside the carefully-guarded prison pen at the dockyard. Even if Lord Mornington had not been driven off by the sentry or Fairfax had not been kept away by his own scruples, they would have derived small aid or comfort from any of the inmates that day. Mornington's ingenious intrigue had been foredoomed from the first. Instead of being foiled by Caraccioli's intervention, he had been saved from ignominious failure.

If Mornington realized this, however, he displayed no evidence of relief or appreciation. He was the first of the party to find his voice, and he spoke unsparingly, in rasping, scornful tones, about fine words and dirty tricks, stealing his men behind his back and forcing them into piracy, by——

At the crash of the first oath, Misson's voice cut coldly across the gush of angry invective.

"Monseigneur forgets that there are ladies present."

Surprized by the plural, Lord Mornington looked round and saw Lucy Higgins lugging a heavy portmanteau as she came out of the curtained doorway leading to the women's quarters. Before he could get into his stride again, Misson continued, more formally than ever:

"Monseigneur is at liberty to visit the taverns, where he will find our new citizens celebrating their freedom and pledging their allegiance to the republic. By questioning them, monseigneur will speedily discover that they are not *his* men, they are not *my* men, and above all, they are not forced men. They are free men; which is to say, they are Libertatians. They are free to remain or free to go, as they please. Such, indeed, is the privilege of every one here, including monseigneur himself."

"Then," announced Lucy Higgins firmly. "I be a-going to stay."

She swung the portmanteau into an ox cart, put her knuckles on her hips and looked around the courtyard with the natural interest of a pretty girl who has been shut up in a suite of rooms with a lot of other women for a fortnight.

"You silly creature, come here this instant!" commanded Lady Mornington from the cart.

"Am I her woman or am I free?" Lucy asked Misson.

"Mademoiselle is free to stay as long as it pleases her to honor my house with her presence," declared the little captain, sweeping the ground with his laced tricorn. "Would that she were a thousand!"

"Monster!" screamed Lady Mornington.

"Fiddlesticks!" contradicted her erstwhile maid. "He and Her Highness the Princess are as proper a married pair as ever we lodged with, and well you know it, my lady, though you'll never admit it to your dying day. They'll treat me very civilly, never fear, and so will the rest of the town. I wish you a pleasant voyage, my lord and lady."

"You poor deluded child!" wailed Lady Mornington. "Oh, what will be your fate, alone in this den of iniquity, without the powerful protection of your lord and master?"

Lucy threw back her head and laughed with all the strength of her healthy young lungs.

"The girl's daft!" pronounced Lord Mornington. "Pick her up and throw her into a cart and let's be off!"

Nobody stirred. It was not the sort of order that either Fairfax or Parker would have been likely to obey, even if Misson's obvious disapproval had not made it suicidal folly to attempt. As it happened, the sea captain and the subaltern were standing side by side, just as they had been standing together on the *Scarborough's* quarter deck, soon after the sighting of the *Victoire*. That moment was now brought vividly back to them and to the Morningtons as Lucy stepped up to the two officers, folded her arms and quoted, in a very fair imitation of Lord Mornington's voice and manner:

" 'Rot the wench! *Ayahs* are cheap in India. Shoot her or keep her yourself, since you're so sweet on her!"

Sobbing hysterically, Lucy turned and fled across the courtyard, to disappear behind the heavy hangings that hid the women's quarters from the outer world.

"Let us proceed, monseigneur," suggested Misson calmly. "Or you may miss the turn of the tide."

Lord Mornington sulkily mounted the leading ox cart beside his wife, while Misson drew back and motioned to the three senior officers to precede him into the next. Dom Pedro and Captain Parker at once climbed into the clumsy vehicle but Fairfax hesitated.

"Captain Misson," he said, "you granted permission, just now, for my lord to visit the taverns and inquire of the *Scarborough's* seamen why they have quit the company's service for your own. May I do the same to the thirty deserters who were lately under my command?"

"Assuredly. You may ask them or say to them whatever you please during the next quarter-hour, while the baggage is being embarked. At the end of that time, we shall look for you on the pier."

"What if I should bring some or all of my men with me?"

"Then they would be permitted to go as freely as yourself."

"Thank you, sir, that is very handsome indeed," said Fairfax.

"Only let us hope, my dear Fairfax, that instead they persuade you to remain."

Shaking his head and smiling, Fairfax ran forward to the leading cart, as the Johannese drivers began prodding their hump-backed teams into motion, to report his mission to the governor.

"Have I your lordship's authorization to offer my fellows a free pardon if they return to duty?"

"Yes, if you think it worth risking a broken head for," grunted Lord Mornington. "You had to flog some of the rogues on the voyage out, I remember, and I'll warrant they remember it too. We'll let bygones be bygones about that fever fort, Mr. Fairfax, and I'd advise you to do the same about your lost platoon. Better not give the knaves the chance to pay off old scores."

At this, Lady Mornington began to scream that the lieutenant would be murdered, she knew he would, and so would all the rest of them. Her husband, whose own nerves were badly upset, commenced to curse her for a chattering fool.

FAIRFAX fled out of the courtyard and across the Grande Place into Victory Road. Keeping easily ahead of the slow, creaking ox carts, he strode directly to the place where he felt sure of finding some, if not all of the deserters, in front of the bar at Fiddler's Green.

His judgment was sound. The tap room was packed with Libertatians standing treat to their new-joined comrades, most of whom were still wearing the blue and white of the Madras Fusileers. Some joker caught sight of Fairfax coming in the door and shouted:

"Attention!"

Every man in uniform instinctively stiffened and spun around, spilling much good rum in the process. Luckily, everybody had already had enough to make him mellow.

"Hurrah! 'Tis the little lieutenant come to join us!" cried a big red-faced fusileer, as he unbuttoned his coat and shoved his tricorn on the back of his head again. "Give him a glass to drink to the glory of Libertatia."

"You mistake my purpose," said Fairfax. "I have not come to join you but to recall you to your duty."

"Ya-a-ah! Trice him up and give him six dozen! Send him aboard with a bloody back like he's given us! The cat's on our side of the fence now, Mr. Flogging Fairfax!"

Snarling vindictively, another deserter thrust himself forward to shake his fist in—but not too closely in—the lieutenant's face This was Will Wyatt, who had been promoted to acting sergeant early in the voyage, because of his bold demeanor and assured voice, only to be reduced to the ranks next day for flinching from the flying fists of a 'tween-decks row. Soon afterward convicted of lying, theft and backbiting, he had been duly tried, triced up to the triangles, and given the minimum number of lashes prescribed by the code.

A swaggerer and a dandy, Wyatt had been the first recruit of the party to use a button stick and pipeclay his white facings. Now he was the first to shed his uniform and rig himself out in full Libertatian costume, from silk bandanna to silver shoe buckles, cutlas on hip and waist sash stuffed with pistols. Snatching one out, he pointed the pistol at Fairfax and commanded—

"Down on your knees!"

"Play-acting as ever," observed the lieutenant coolly. "Put up that pistol, Wyatt, draw your blade and I'll give you a fencing-lesson."

"Fair enough," approved the big blond man who had first spoken.

Several others echoed his words, pressing back to clear a ring, and exhorting Wyatt to draw and fall on. But Will Wyatt was not the sort to give up an advantage, and he had drunk just enough to make him dangerous. His finger trembled slightly on the trigger, but the muzzle never wavered from the silver gorget on the officer's scarlet coat.

Now was his chance, Wyatt felt, to prove himself the ruthless sea-rover.

"Kneel or die, —— you!" he ranted. "One! Two——"

*Smack!*

Setting his glass down carefully on the bar, the big blond man took two swift strides, swung a long blue arm and slapped the flat of a paddle-sized palm across Will Wyatt's face. Bowled over like an empty bottle, Wyatt hit the sanded floor with the back of his head so hard that he shook the house. He lay there limp and still, both eyes shut and both nostrils streaming blood. As he fell, he pulled the trigger, but the flintlock missed fire.

"Let that be a lesson to you, Will Wyatt," said the big blond man impressively. "Remember our creed and law: 'Whosoever among you sweareth or taketh of the Lord's name in vain, for the first time, let him be smitten on the lips with the open hand.' "

"You've stove his skull in, Ling!" cried a bystander. "You've killed the man."

"Dead men don't have nose bleed," pronounced Sheer Hulk from behind the bar. "Prop him up against the wall and he'll come to presently. Fingers, a glass of wine to Mr. Fairfax. I'm sorry this happened, Lieutenant, and likely I'd have been sorrier, if Ling, here, hadn't been so handy. I never thought but that Wyatt would draw and fight like a man. What's your pleasure, sir?"

"To say a few words to those formerly under my command, by Captain Misson's leave—and yours."

"That you shall, sir," promised the autocrat of Fiddler's Green. "Fingers, rap on the bar."

"Men," said Fairfax, "you came to me as recruits and I've tried to make you soldiers. What you were before I found you aboard the *Scarborough* when I joined her at Sheerness, I know not. Since then, however, you have had your duties and your rights, the one to learn, the other to be safeguarded. Throughout the voyage, I held you to your duties and disciplined defaulters as fairly as I knew how.

"Can any man here say that I ever punished him wantonly? Can any of you name the time when I ever cheated him or let him be cheated out of a farthing of his pay, a crumb of his rations, a drop of his rum, or any of his other issues and allowances? Can any of you cite an instance where I suffered the ship's officers to mistreat or neglect my men?"

"Not you, sir," spoke up a sallow, sickly looking youth with watery eyes. "When I was down with ship fever and the doctor blind drunk, you spent all night with me in the sick bay, pourin' out medicine and carin' for me like a hospital hag. You've dealt very handsomely with us, Lieutenant."

" 'Tis the Company that has dealt with you, through me its servant and officer," retorted Fairfax. "The Company found you penniless, ragged and starving; it put its pay in your pocket, its coat on your back and its bread in your mouth. In return, you swore to serve the Company overseas, by guarding its settlements in India against the robberies and tumults of that ill-governed land.

"You admit that the Company, through my agency, has dealt with you very handsomely. How handsomely are you dealing with the Company? Will you be true to your oath or will you break it by joining a set of men who, no matter how generous and humane they may be, are nevertheless outlaws and enemies to the Company and the Crown?"

"And when and how did we take that same oath?" demanded a deserter by the name of Kerrigan. "Will your honor tell us that, now?"

"When you were enlisted."

A yell of mocking laughter went up from the entire crowd.

"Enlisted, were we? That's a grand word, surely, to be describing the process with," said Kerrigan. "Press-ganged would be more like it. It's little your honor knows of the Company's crimps and their black work. Ask Ling, here, how they saved him from hunger and poverty and all."

Thus called on, the ruddy-faced giant blushed redder than ever, but spoke plainly and to the point.

"I wa'n't hungry," he stated with a solid regard for facts. "Leastways, I'd eaten my share of the shillin' ordinary at the Drover's Arms, Smithfield. And I wa'n't in rags, but wearin' a clean smock-frock and new boots. I wa'n't penniless nor shillin'-less nor yet poundless, for I'd eleven pound, seven and sixpence left, after sellin' my bullocks at Smithfield Market and seein' the wonders o' London.

"Got lost in a miz-maze of dirty lanes, till I met two very civil-spoken men who offered to set me right on the road to Romford. I couldn't do less than offer to stand treat in return for their trouble, so in we steps to a pot house, where I calls for quarts all round. Then each of 'em stands treat in his turn, but betwixt the second and third pots, I drops off asleep with my head on the table.

"Woke up next morn with my mouth tastin' of sheep dip, and a grist mill grindin' in my head. They'd hocussed my ale—

that's poisonin'. They'd stolen my money and Sunday clothes — that's robbery. They'd locked me and the rest of us up in a vile black vault with bars to the windows— that's kidnapin' and 'prisonment. And there on the planks beside me lay a dead man, stark and cold. *That* was murder.

"There they kept us, without bite or sup, till we gave in and made our marks on the muster roll, after we'd held up our hands while somebody gabbled sommat 'bout servin' of the company overseas, s'help me, amen. A posse o' rogues with guns and swords herded us out o' that place and aboard a covered boat what they called a tender, and so to the *Scarborough*.

"I've served on the petty jury and heard the Queen's justices say as how an oath taken compulsory-like don't hold nor bind. Isn't that the law of it, sir? That bein' so, then what's to hinder our stayin' here, if so we choose, in Libertatia town? Look what we get if we stay. Each man is to have as much land as he can fence with his own labor, and his share o' the treasure and cattle, all to be divided up 'cordin' to Act of Parliament, save a tenth part for the common stock. All men to be free and equal, and every tenth man a member of Parliament.

"Now will you tell us, sir, why we should give up all that to go soldierin' in Injia, for a parcel o' tun-bellied traders who've treated us so scurvily?"

"Well said, Ling!" approved the sallow youth with the watery eyes. "Settin' off your goodness against the crimpin', Lieutenant, and lettin' it go at that, what have you to offer us, sir?"

"Short rations, long marches, coarse fare and the chance to be shot at tuppence a day," answered Fairfax frankly. "I promise you those and one thing more: The right to call yourselves Englishmen."

"We're Libertatians now!"

"Call yourselves that and clink your doubloons while yet you may, my lads. You'll find your treasure is only fairies' gold and your new nation a fleeting dream that will vanish with the day. Here's the plain sense of it: The *Bom Jesus* sails within the hour, and within a month she'll carry the news to Goa. There is the richest city, the best-equipped arsenal and the most powerful fleet this side of Europe. Within another few months at most, that fleet will be smashing its way into this harbor."

"Arrah, let 'em come!" cried Kerrigan. "Sure, they're only Portygees. We can bate the likes of them anny day."

"Suppose you do. Then so much the greater will be the alarm in Europe. Now that the war is over, both France and England are free to send out strong squadrons to defend their East India Companies. Very likely they will send them out in concert to make an end of this nest of freebooters. What chance would your three frigates and two little forts have against the combined navies of France and England? What good will your gold and your lands and your play-time Parliaments do you then, when the Queen's ships lie in the offing with their broadsides trained on the town? What could you look for but to die, by blade or bullet or hangman's noose?

"Now to save you from that fate, I have interceded in your behalf with my Lord Mornington. His Excellency has been pleased to promise a pardon to each and every one of you who will go aboard with me now, to sail for India and re-enlist in the Company's service."

"At tuppence a day," sneered Kerrigan.

"Neither more nor less," said Fairfax. "Your choice is plain, between that and Execution Dock. You all saw Captain Kidd's tarred skeleton hanging in chains by the waterside, as you went aboard the tender. If you would die like that, stand fast. If not——"

He looked at his watch, put it back in the fob, and, in his parade ground voice commanded: "Fall in!"

Shoulders squared and left feet stepped off automatically. Their minds were still irresolute but their oft-drilled bodies reacted without delay and, once they had begun to move, carried their owners with them. Each man, seeing his fellows start, felt encouraged to continue, merging his personality and will into the plastic crowd-consciousness of the platoon. In another moment, they would have been in formation and ready to form fours and be marched aboard, when the spell was abruptly broken by the click of a flint-lock.

Glancing down and to one side, Fairfax saw the forgotten Will Wyatt, still sitting on the floor with his back propped up against the wall, his left eye closed and his right eye glaring vindictively along the sights of the pistol. Without waiting to finish cocking it or raising the muzzle any farther, Wyatt let go the hammer. The priming flashed, the muzzle spat smoke and flame, and Fairfax fell with a half ounce ball through his thigh.

## CHAPTER X

### TEW'S TOWER

IT WAS Kerrigan who plucked away Wyatt's pistol, hit him on the head with the butt and pulled out the boxwood ramrod for a tourniquet. With this and Ling's tolerably clean shirt, they managed to keep Fairfax from bleeding to death while somebody was fetching Doctor Levasseur, the *Victoire's* peppery little surgeon.

"*A l'hôpital*," he commanded, after he had rebandaged the wound with the skill he had learned in eleven years' active service afloat.

"*Mais, il faut que je déparle pour l'Inde,*" protested Fairfax faintly, as they slipped a blanket under him and four fusileers stooped down to pick it up by the corners.

"What, you would go to sea?" exploded Levasseur ferociously. "With that hole through your leg and those twin imbeciles of ship's doctors? The Englishman is a dunce and a drunkard; the Portuguese a species of ape who has killed more of his own crew than did all our cannon-balls. Between them, they would hack your leg off tonight and throw the rest of you overboard after it tomorrow. Or, if you did live to reach Goa, you would die there. I know that marble pig sty, the Royal Hospital. Mine is only two tents, but clean."

In that respect and some others, the National Hospital of Libertatia was a century and a half ahead of its time. Like the pavilions at Fiddler's Green, its wards were nothing but platforms with roofs over them. Each platform was raised on piles and built of deck planking, calked, scrubbed and holystoned; the roof was double, thatch over canvas with a deep airspace between. Along the ridge-pole, much of the sail cloth was cut away and replaced with nettings of ratline stuff, to make ventilators that could be closed by pulling the light lines attached to the corners of canvas flaps. But those flaps were seldom drawn when Dr. Levasseur knew it.

He was a fanatic on fresh air and cleanliness, born out of his age, and given small chance to practise his theories until he went to sea. There he had achieved the miracle of keeping an old time wooden man-o'-war sweet and healthy, so the *Victoire's* crew had voted him a free hand ashore. Pigs were fattening on the offal that rotted in the gutters of London and Paris, while Libertatia was sweeping its streets and burning its garbage, according to the best modern practises of the Old Testament. Offenders against the sanitary code were sentenced to serve as scavengers or to swab the hospital floor.

Lying between the cool, clean sheets of a cot in the surgical ward, Fairfax had nothing to obscure his view of the roadstead. Wistfully he watched the *Bom Jesus*, lying off the dockyard, as her crew set her fore, main and sprit-topsails, braced up the after-yards with the head-sail a-box to pay her off, lay down from aloft, and broke out the ground-tackle. Round she swung in the off-shore breeze; the yards were squared, and the tall lateen spanker set on the mizzen. Faintly over the water came the three hearty cheers that those aboard her gave their generous foes, as the galleon stood out to sea.

"But for that craven Wyatt, I'd be aboard her now, with my nine-and-twenty safe on the troop deck," Fairfax reflected bitterly. "I had them all but won over when he shot me down. Would that honest Ling had stove the wastrel's skull in for him, or that I had had the wit to take away the fellow's pistols. Even if I don't lose my leg, I've lost my men, for there will be no winning them away from Libertatia by the time the next cartel sails."

Luckily for the lieutenant, Wyatt's bullet had missed the thigh bone. But the shot wound festered, as wounds regularly did in those days, until Dr. Levasseur thought that he would have to cut off the leg to save Fairfax from dying of blood poisoning. The knives were being ground for the operation, when the infection noticeably began to ebb, as the rallying red corpuscules drove back the invading streptococci.

On Christmas day, Fairfax was up and limping about the wards on a crutch made of a forked sapling, to lend the overworked doctor and his volunteer nurses a hand with the press of fever cases. The rains had come with November, roaring down on the roof and cataracting off the eves in a dense gray downpour that hid everything beyond half pistol shot. When the thatch was soaked through, the *loblolly*-boys had to close the ventilators to stop the dripping, and the hospital stewed in the humid heat.

Out in the sodden, steaming swamps, myriads of pupae were wriggling to the surface of every stagnant pool, to crack open their swaddling-cases and dry their wings in the brief, hot intervals of sunshine between the thunder showers. Swarms of mosquitoes sucked the malaria germs from the thin-mixed blood of the Portuguese half-castes who had joined from the *Bom Jesus* and injected the microbes into the veins of the English, French and Dutch.

Without quinine, which the Jesuits had not yet made known to the world outside South America, little could be done to help those smitten with the mysterious "marsh fever." Two hundred and eleven souls—one-sixth of the total population of Libertatia—sickened and died during that rainy season of 1713-14.

Undismayed, the rest of the queer little community carried on and accomplished much. Fairfax found a lot of things to set down in his diary, as soon as he was able to be up and about.

Jan. 3rd., 1714. Fixed a round piece of board for a foot to my crutch, to keep it from sinking into the soft sand. This served me so well that I made shift to walk nearly the length of Victory Road, where I saw many notable improvements. Almost all the land on both sides, that did formerly lie open, has been parceled out and enclosed, and cottages erected by the married men who as bachelors had messed together in clubs, but now dwell very domestically.

Several side streets and lanes have been opened through the palm-grove, in strict accordance with the grand plan of the future great city. At the corner of Pickle Tub Lane, I found my erstwhile recruit and savior Ned Ling, cutting up meat for his customers. Having been bred up as a butcher and drover, he chose to take his share of the goods in cattle. Now he has his shop and slaughter house behind; salts beef for the fleet, buys cows for trinkets from the Antankara, has nine men and a black boy working for him, and prospers exceedingly.

Ling tells me that Will Wyatt was well flogged for his cowardice by his mates, and has been forbidden to bear arms until the next battle, when he must redeem himself or else be banished the realm, as no fit Libertatian.

Jan. 4th. Today ventured as far as the Grande Place, to see the Parliament House. Found the building completed but empty, since Parliament is not in session. Sat down on the doorstep to watch Sergeant Horn drill his Black Musketeers. They performed their exercises as exactly as any regiment of the line for above two hours, after which he dismissed them and came to join me. Leaning his halberd against the door post, the sergeant sent for a pitcher of *bumboo*, which we quaffed by turns while he discoursed on politics.

He told me with pride that he himself was a member of Parliament, and described the late sitting. Caraccioli opened the session with a handsome speech, showing the advantages flowing from order, and proposed lodging the supreme power in the hands of one who should have the authority to reward brave and virtuous actions and punish the vicious, according to the laws which the Parliament should decree. This ruler was to hold office for three years and to have the title of Lord Conservator.

This was approved *nem. con.*, and Misson was forthwith chosen Conservator, with power to appoint his officers and council. A law was then made that Parliament must be convened at least once every year, and that nothing of moment may be undertaken without its approbation. In a word, the first session lasted ten days, and a great many wholesome laws were enacted, registered in the state book and published to the citizens.

Misson's first act as Conservator was to promote Captain Tew to the rank of lord high admiral, and then make Caraccioli secretary of state. He chose a council of the ablest, without distinction of rank or color, and appointed a committee of linguists to regularly combine the many languages into one.

An equal division was made of the treasure and cattle, according to the promises that had seduced the men of the *Scarborough* and the *Bom Jesus* from their former allegiance. Then every one began to enclose land, either for himself or for his neighbor who had hired his assistance.

Jan. 10th. The *Victoire*, being old and sea-worn, has been taken apart in the dockyard, and completely rebuilt. Today the Libertatian corsair *République*, the captured Portuguese fifty-gun ship that we found here on our arrival, put forth on a plundering voyage. Many of the men from the *Scarborough* and the *Bom Jesus* have sailed in her. Others refused, saying that she is so high-built and carries so many heavy guns on her upperdeck that she will certainly be overset in the first gale.

Jan. 17th. Discharged from hospital as patient; retained by Dr. Levasseur to serve as his assistant—which I protest I am very ill-fitted to be—until the marsh-fever abates. At present it increases, crowding the hospital so that a new ward has been erected, on the same plan as the two old ones.

Going there today for the first time, I encountered Lucy, my Lady Mornington's mutinous maid, come to help with the nursing. When asked how she fared at Captain Misson's, she replied that they treated her very civilly at my 'Lord Conserve's,' but that she supposed I knew that she would be leaving there before long. This with a great air of mystery. Told her that I had no time for court gossip and set her to serving out the rice gruel.

Jan. 18th. Roused at two this morning by a tremendous thunderclap, to find it blowing a hurricane, with much rain. By the creaking and straining of the timbers, I realized that the flimsy building could not long resist so furious a gale. The floor was heaving beneath our feet, the roof canvas bellying and snapping, while sheets of water, blown in through the open side of the pavilion, drenched the beds and convinced the greater part of the patients that they were back at sea and in desperate case. Some shouted to take the tops'ls off her, while others, mistaking the thunder and lightning for great guns, leaped from their cots to seek their battle stations.

"Those that were not stark mad with delirium were for the most part too weak to stir; the loblolly boys were fuddled with drink, and the bearer I sent for slow to appear. But somehow we got all the sick out and safe bestowed in buildings more remote from the beach, before the roofs blew off first one and then the other of the two old wards, followed not long after by that of the new.

"The wind, increasing to an incredible force and velocity, got under the three platforms that had been the floors of the hospital buildings, heaved them up, rived the stout planking into fragments and hurled them on high and afar, as if they had been blown up with gunpowder.

For a time we feared that Dr. Levasseur's dwelling and the dispensary beside it would also be carried away, and with them, all the instruments and medicines. But the seamen turned out in force to our aid, and began to pass lines over the roofs and secure them to the trees on either hand. Thus anchored, the two buildings survived the hurricane that razed almost every other house on the waterfront, unroofed a score of others in the town, plucked the tops off many coco palms, and did grievous damage to the growing crops.

When the day broke, 'twas strange to see how much less mischief had been wrought afloat than ashore. In this landlocked haven, with good holding ground for their anchors and having had time to warp over into Monsoon Cove, the shipping were riding out the tremendous gale very securely, and when it was over, had not suffered the loss of a single spar. But much anxiety is expressed for the safety of the over-gunned *République*.

Jan. 19th. Captain Misson or Lord Conserve, as simple Lucy titles him, came to thank me in person for doing my simple duty by my charges during the storm of night before last. After much complimenting in the French fashion, he besought me very earnestly to turn Libertatian, promising to make me commander in chief of the armies of the republic. I answered that my oath of allegiance to the Queen and the Company stood somewhat in the way, but that if he would surrender his fleet and fortresses to me forthwith, I should grant him better terms than would the admiral of the Portuguese squadron now doubtless on its way from Goa.

Misson begged to correct me there, for to his certain knowledge the Portuguese never venture upon the Indian Ocean during the two stormy months of January and February, and therefore he was not expecting them before March, when they would find a warm welcome prepared.

Jan. 23rd. The continued storms have blown away the miasma and foul humors of the marshes, to the vast betterment of the public health. Only two new cases of fever these three days.

Jan. 28th. Took a turn on the beach, where I found Captain Misson, Sergeant Horn and sundry others pegging and taping the lines of two large redoubts or batteries. These are to be armed with mortars intended for a Dutch fort at Ceylon, and with the choicest and heaviest of the guns taken from the *Bom Jesus* and the *Gunj Suwarie*.

The latter, as she was too clumsy and ungainly for any use, has been broken up. Her cordage and knee timbers are stored in the dockyard, together with her bolts, eyes, chains and other ironwork. Her huge poop or after-castle, with all its great and small cabins, stern galleries and rich adornments, is being reerected on dry land, as a palace for Admiral Tew.

Feb. 7th. Visited Tew's Tower, to watch the workmen hoist the great poop lantern to the topmost pinnacle. When lighted, it will be visible from the outer bay and serve as a sailing mark for ships making the harbor. That, and the fantastical look of the building, curiously carved and gilded and hung about with balconies, give it a strong likeness to Mr. Winstanley's lighthouse on the Eddystone, before it was overset in the great storm ten years ago. But the situation is very unlike; Tew's Tower being farther inland than any other house in Libertatia. It stands in a small natural park some fifty yards southwesterly from the Grande Place, by the cattlepath that leads southward to the country of the Antankara.

When I asked Tom Tew why he chose so remote a spot, he replied that the Parliament House had taken up the last good place on the square, where the victualers used to have their booths, while the water front is not genteel enough for Mistress Lucy. This, then, is the mighty matter she was hinting about. They are to be married by Caraccioli himself, as soon as their new house is completed, and I am bid to the wedding.

Feb. 11th. One of the two new built sloops left today on a cruise to the northward, mainly for the purpose of training some of the raw blacks in seamanship.

Feb. 14th. Visited the school conducted by the *Victoire's* schoolmaster for the ship's boys and the Joahannese and black children. They are studying the new language compounded by the committee of linguists. The words and phrases being, in most cases, already in common use hereabouts, the vocabulary is soon mastered.

Feb. 18th. The crew of the cruising sloop returned to port today in their small boats, having lost their fine new vessel by running her on an uncharted rock near Cape Amber. The other new sloop is to be sent out accordingly, under that experienced sea artist Malachi Drury, to take soundings and make a careful survey of the coast.

Feb. 27th. Put on my red coat to do honor to the occasion, at the desire of Lucy Higgins and Tom Tew, who are to be wed this night. Great festivities are in store: Nine fat beeves are to be roasted whole, Madagascar fashion, with tubs of punch set forth for the throng outside, while the captains and the high officers of state sit down to the banquet table in the sandalwood-paneled hall that was once the great cabin of the *Gunj Suwarie*. Portuguese pastrycooks have prepared a mountain of sweetmeats; a band of music will play, and the great lantern on the roof is to be lighted for the first time.

Later. Much to note down and but little time to write. We were feasting merrily, in hall and without, and Captain Misson was toasting the happy pair, when in burst old Malachi Drury, whom we thought at sea.

'Five Portygee sail of the line!' he cried. "All fifty-gun ships—fell in with 'em off Cape Amber and raced 'em home! They're in the outer bay by this time. For——'s sake, douse that big light topside!"

"Extinguish the beacon," affirmed Misson, without the least excitement or perturbation. "Be tranquil, my friends; they will not attempt the channel tonight. We have time for one last toast.

Charge your glasses, draw your blades and drink with me to tomorrow's victory!"

## CHAPTER XI

### THE BATTLE OF LIBERTATIA

AS FAIRFAX sanded the last line and closed the diary, he thought how easily a little more audacity on the part of the Portuguese could have turned tomorrow's battle into tonight's surprize. They must have marked the course of Malachi Drury's flying sloop against the sunset, and then seen the great lantern blaze out from the top of Tew's Tower; nor could they have failed to realize that this must be his guiding light. They must have marked where Drury tacked round the end of the coral reef, for the night was still young when he came ashore, and it must have been still twilight when he entered the harbor mouth.

Suppose the Portuguese had held him close in chase and let him pilot them through! The forts and the fleet inside were guarded by less than a score of grumblers left on sentry duty or anchor watch, while the rest of the rovers were carousing round the barbecue pits and punch tubs at the lord high admiral's wedding feast. The Goa squadron had come betimes and caught Libertatia ungirt and in her cups.

But those cups were soon drained and tossed aside.

*Clang! Clang! Clang!* resounded the *Gunj Suwarie's* deep-toned bell, from its belfry below the lantern, as the light was suddenly quenched on Tew's Tower. *Clang! Clang! Clang!*

A roaring, roistering sea song stopped in midchorus. Five hundred men stood silent, with charred gobbet of beef or golden goblet of rum held halfway to the bearded lips, while they counted the bell strokes.

*Clang! Clang! Clang!*

"Nine bells, mates! Battle stations!"

A door slammed open in the wall of Tew's Tower, beside the tall stern windows ablaze with candle light. Out on the gloriously carved and painted "admiral's walk" or quarter gallery that projected like a balcony twenty feet above the heads of the crowd, came Misson, Tew, Caraccioli stumping along on his new wooden leg, Van Ghent, Voix de Foudre, and a score of lesser officers.

Stepping to the center of the gallery rail, Misson held up his hand. The crowd became so silent that those behind him could hear, through the whispering of the night breeze in the palms, the sputter and hiss of beef juices dripping on the glowing coals in the barbecue pits below.

"Citizens," proclaimed the lord conservator, "the enemy is at our gates. Five Portuguese men-of-war are now in the outer bay. They may attack at once or, what is more probable, wait until dawn. In any case, let us, in the words of the ancient Romans, look to it that the republic take no harm.

"The gunners and musketeers of the garrisons of Fort Indépendance and Fort République will proceed to their posts at once. The Lord High Admiral will now issue his commands to the fleet."

Misson stepped back and Tew came forward, a gallant figure in his wedding suit of scarlet taffeta, a long red feather stuck jauntily into his broad-brimmed hat, jewels studding his sword hilt, and a golden whistle, the emblem of his authority, hanging about his neck by a chain of diamonds.

"Lads!" he shouted. "I've been a married man for nine-and-twenty minutes by the cabin clock. But I'm leaving my newwed bride tonight to go with you and drub the Portingales! Let's take their five tall ships and bring 'em home as a wedding gift for Mistress Tew!"

A tremendous cheer went roaring up and kept on roaring until Tew cut it short with a long, shrill blast on his golden whistle.

"All hands aboard!"

THAT was a busy night in Libertatia. Fairfax worked as hard as the rest, helping Dr. Levasseur turn the pavilions at Fiddler's Green, two empty warehouses and the rice granary into emergency wards for tomorrow's wounded. No matter which side won, there would be plenty of work for the surgeons.

His preparations complete, Fairfax snatched a hasty breakfast, filled his flask with *bumboo* and his pockets with biscuits, borrowed a spy glass and picked out a good place on the beach from which to watch the battle.

The morning stars turned pale and fled before the spreading glory of crimson and gold. Black against the brief splendor of the tropic dawn showed the masts and yards of the outlaw fleet, no longer riding at its accustomed anchorage before the town, but over in Monsoon Cove. During the night, Tew had kedged and towed his vessels across to this northeastern corner of the harbor, for several good reasons.

In the first place, this position would draw the enemy's fire away from the town; in the second, it would give him the weather gage, for the wind that had brought the Portuguese scudding before it was still blowing strong from the northeast. Finally, by drawing up his little squadron in a line ahead, bisecting the curve of the cove, Tew had secured his flanks by leaving no room for a deep draft vessel to pass at either end.

His line was formed by the *Victoire*, flag, followed by the *Bijoux*, the *Résolution*, the *Surveillante*—Malachi Drury's little scouting craft—and the other two sloops, the *Enfance* and the *Liberté*. They were in line ahead, with their bows toward Fort Indépendance on the northern headland, and their starboard batteries trained sharp forward on the entrance channel. Each vessel rode to bow and stern anchors, with springs on her cables, boarding nets triced up, canvas furled, and the sloops' topmasts and the ships' topgallant masts sent down. From every masthead flew the blue and white flag of Libertatia.

"A brave little fleet," thought Fairfax, "but too weak for the work in hand. The *Victoire* mounts forty guns, and each of the two converted merchantmen mounts thirty—that's an even hundred. Eight little brass swivels on each of the three sloops gives a grand total of one hundred and twenty-four pieces against two hundred and fifty of heavier caliber on heavier-timbered ships. The Portuguese admiral should find this a holiday task."

That the Portuguese so regarded it was soon made evident. When the sun was an hour high and the flood tide running strong, their flag-ship came sailing proudly in between the headlands, both broadsides blazing away together as she passed the forts and received their fire. A few splinters chipped from her lofty topsides, three shotholes through her foretops'l, some trifling damage to her standing and running rigging and she was through, her crew waving their caps and shrilly cheering, her drummers and trumpeters rattling and pealing triumphantly.

"*BR-R-ROOM!* rolled a deeper, sterner music from the *Victoire's* long eighteens. Solid shot battered the battleship's starboard bow from cutwater to weather foreshrouds, smashing a ragged gap through her bulwarks, dismounting two guns, sweeping the crowded foredeck and killing or wounding some twenty-five or thirty men. That stopped the concert and started the fight.

Drawing up abeam of the *Victoire*, the Portuguese admiral backed his topsails and let go a sheet anchor astern. Before he could check his headway, however, the drag of the current had carried him abreast the gap between the *Victoire* and the *Bijoux*. Engaging them both with the forward and after divisions of his starboard battery, the admiral at the same time signaled to the other vessels of his squadron as they followed him in, their topsails towering dimly through the dense bank of powder smoke now choking the harbor mouth.

Blinded by the smoke, the fortress gunners were firing at random and making poor practise. Battleship after battleship swept past the forts with little scathe, to take up her position as ordered. The second in line drew up abaft the flagship, dropped anchor and engaged the *Victoire*. The third Portuguese passed outside the first two, luffed up and took her station opposite Voix de Foudre and his Frenchmen in the *Bijoux;* the fourth invader tackled the Dutch-manned *Résolution*.

Then out of the smoke reek and into the harbor staggered the *Sao Paulo*, the last and the most unlucky of the Goa fleet. A dull sailer, she had lingered long enough in passing the forts for her to receive two full salvos. At least three twenty-four-pound shot from Fort Indépendance had struck the *Sao Paulo* squarely on the water line, where the timbers were much decayed. Stove in between wind and water, she leaked so fast that the only way to save her from sinking was to bring her on the careen.

The lower deck thirty-two-pounders were run in, the port lids closed and secured, while gun after gun of the starboard spardeck battery was trundled across to port, heeling the *Sao Paulo* far enough over to leeward to raise the ragged wounds in her weather side above the reach of the waves.

But the tons of water swashing down the slope of the lower hold, and the force of the wind aloft, increased her list until the *Sao Paulo* was practically sailing on her side. A helpless hulk, unable to steer a course or fire a shot, the great fifty-gun ship drifted with wind and tide past her consorts' lee, till she reached a point near the center of the harbor, where the cannon balls from

Fort République began to fall short astern.

"Quick with the felted planks and the sheets of lead!" exhorted the *Sao Paulo's* captain from where he clung to the fife rail of his steeply slanting quarter deck. "Be of good cheer, my valiant mariners, for we are beyond the range of the pirates' guns."

He spoke too soon. The smooth white beach, unbroken, so far as he could see, by any sign of earthworks or fortifications, suddenly belched smoke and flame. Six great black spheres curved high in the air, where one of them burst with a crash that blended with the deep-voiced thunder of the unseen guns. Two of the monstrous missiles splashed alongside, exploded under water, and sent gigantic columns of spray spouting high above the blanched faces of the ignorant, superstitious half-caste crew of the *Sao Paulo*, who screamed that they were being attacked by demons from the sea and sky.

"*Bombas!* They are but *bombas!*" shouted their captain reassuringly. "No demons but mortal missiles of common iron filled with gunpowder. In Europe they are well known. Be not dismayed!"

But the bursting of two twelve-inch shells just above their heads, and the blowing up of half the waist by the bomb that crashed through the deck and exploded inboard, completed the demoralization of that mongrel, black-and-tan crew. Thereafter, the *Sao Paulo* became a gibbering mad-house, some of whose inmates were already diving overboard to swim to the nearest friendly ship.

But that vessel, at the head of the Portuguese line of battle, was herself in evil case. Besides being engaged with the three Libertatian sloops and the *Résolution*, she was suffering from the raking fire of the second masked redout that Misson had built on the beach. From its situation between the wharf and the dockyard gate, this was known as the Dockyard Battery.

Ten long forty-eight-pounders had been mounted there, on sloping carriages that depressed the breeches and raised the muzzles to such an extent that these guns could hurl round shot over the crest of a mass of protecting, whitewashed sandbags, and drop the missiles in Monsoon Cove. Concentrating their fire on the nearest fifty-gun ship, they brought down her foremast, scored, split, gouged and splintered her spar deck, poop bulkhead, round house, booms, boats and topsides generally, and then, having chopped plenty of kindling, began to use red-hot shot.

In a somewhat similar manner, Fort Indépendance, aided by a crossfire from Fort République, was knocking the gilt-work off the tall stern-works of the rearmost Portuguese ship. This support of the forts and batteries, and their own cooler, steadier, straighter shooting were enabling the Libertatian seamen-gunners to hold their own.

SO FAIRFAX judged, though it was hard for him or for any one else to get any real idea of how the fight was going. Nearly two hundred cannon had been in action for nearly two hours, making a deafening din that sounded like old times in Flanders. Borne by the wind, the roar of the battle was heard by the Antankara, forty miles southward, to their great perplexity and dismay.

But the wind, though it carried the sound and blew the smoke away from the gun muzzles of the Libertatian fleet, failed to blow it clear of the rest of the harbor. Through the dense, sulfur reeking clouds that swirled and eddied but never broke, Fairfax could catch only occasional glimpses of masts and yards rising out of the smoke like trees above low lying dawn mists. For an instant he would see a shot-torn ensign flying bravely at a mast head, above a hundred loose ends of severed rigging; or a group of half naked topmen laying out on a yard to reeve new halyards or hurl down hand grenades, while behind them the round top spat pale flames from swivel and musketoon. Then the smoke of another broadside would billow upward to hide the picture from his eyes.

Once he saw the fall of a toppling mast, its yard arms crowded with men. Again and again he saw the derelict *Sao Paulo* drifting by with bomb shells bursting against her up-heaved side and her lee rail lipping the water. She had been caught in a tidal eddy that was carrying her around and around in a circle near the center of the harbor

To escape the blinding smoke from the Dockyard Battery, directly to windward of where he stood, Fairfax moved inland and to the rear of the guns, until he came to a place midway between the two batteries and near the foot of Victory Road. There he found Misson, overlooking the battle like a general and attended by a small staff of aides de camp, dispatch runners, and a headquarters bugler. Beside him stood Caraccioli, combing his long black beard with his fingers while he talked with two very tall and striking looking young women.

Bejeweled like empresses and robed like sultanas, they had thrown back their translucent veils to flutter in the wind and leave their dark, stormy beauty unconcealed. Brown-skinned, black-eyed, strong-limbed, bold in bearing and alike in feature, they were unmistakably the warlike princesses of Johanna—Aesa and her sister Zarfa.

"My dear," said Misson to his wife, as the young Englishman came up. "Permit me to present my very good friend, Lieutenant Fairfax."

The subaltern saluted; the princess glared.

"You wear a sword!" she cried scornfully, in the Libertatian *patois*. "Go, wield it in the battle!"

"I beg your highness's pardon," answered Fairfax, trying not to smile. "But I have the honor to serve the East India Company."

"An enemy!" blazed Aesa. "Hold him, sister, while I cut his throat!"

Zarfa obediently clasped the astonished youth from behind in round bare arms as brown as bronze and about as yielding, while Aesa drew a venomous looking curved dagger. She had every intention of using it, when Misson tore the weapon from her and threw it away.

"For shame!" reproved the little lord conservator, browbeating the two tall Amazons who over-topped him by many inches but wilted and cringed at his frown. "Aesa, would you kill a prisoner? Zarfa, release the gentleman at once! Ask his pardon, both of you."

Bewildered and overwhelmed by her lord's displeasure, Aesa burst into tears. Zarfa, who had let go of Fairfax as if his red coat had become a red coal, now clasped her weeping sister to her breast, patting her gently and uttering comforting little croonings, while over Aesa's bowed head she looked at the three men with the heart-breaking reproachfulness of a wounded doe.

Since Misson was again engrossed in directing his batteries, Caraccioli took it upon himself to speak for the family.

"*Ces belles sauvages* are simple children of nature," he explained in his rumbling Romagnole French. "They can not comprehend the amenities of civilized warfare. I trust the Lieutenant understands?"

"Egad!" Fairfax smiled ruefully. "I can't understand how even you two found the courage to marry them!"

This seemed to strike Caraccioli as a rare jest, for he pealed out a bull-bellow of Gargantuan mirth that resounded even through the thunder of two hundred guns. Aesa, looking up in wonder, smiled through her tears and then laughed a laugh as musical as the tinkling of her silver anklets, while she danced on the beach and pointed out to sea.

"Look! Look!" she rejoiced. "They sink! They drown!"

The wretched *Sao Paulo* was drifting out of the smoke for the last time. Even as they watched, she rolled completely over on her beam ends, her upturned bilge crawling with creeping things that clustered and clung like ants to a drifting twig. Righting as she filled and sank, she went down in comparatively shoal water, her upper masts and yards remaining above the roiling whirlpools dotted with the heads of swimmers. Several of these vanished as a shell burst just above them.

"Tell the mortar battery to cease firing on the wreck!" commanded Misson indignantly.

"O foolish one!" groaned Aesa under her breath. "O sparer of vipers!"

A dispatch runner sped slantwise down the beach and the mortars were silent, but not for long. Before they had time to cool, out of the smoke appeared the Portuguese flagship herself. Bearing up toward the town, she ran into a cross-fire of bombs and red-hot shot that soon would have sent her staggering back, had not Misson suddenly commanded his headquarters bugler to sound the "cease fire!"

"O madman!" raved his wife and sister-in-law. "What lunacy is this?"

"She comes on an errand of mercy," answered Misson. "She is trying to rescue the survivors."

Unmolested, the flagship reached the wreck, lowered her boats and picked up all that were left of the *Sao Paulo's* crew. Then, instead of coming about to return to her former station, she resumed her course toward the eastward and the town.

Both batteries reopened, promptly and furiously. But their shot and shell now flew too high to do her any harm. Designed for long range work, the guns could not be depressed sufficiently to hit a ship inside their arc of fire.

*"Corpo di Bacco!"* roared Caraccioli, relapsing as most men do in times of stress to the speech of his boyhood. "We have not a gun to bear! But there is an extra forty-eight-pounder ready mounted in the dockyard—I marked it yesterday. Let's cut a gun port for it at the angle of the stockade and emplace it there, while yet there is time!"

"Well said! Let's do it!" chorused the staff and orderlies, with Libertatian democracy.

But none dared stir until Misson nodded permission. Then away they raced like boys let out from school, till the last one disappeared in through the dockyard gate. That one was Caraccioli, whose wooden leg sank deep into the sand at every step. It would have sunk much deeper but for the help of Zarfa, who was supporting her husband's crippled side with all the strength of her broad young shoulder.

"Go help your sister," suggested Misson to Aesa, who had remained with him, as had Fairfax.

She smiled down at him with the triumphant smile of the wife who sees through her husband's devices.

"O crafty one!" she mocked. "You let them go because they will be safer behind the stockade."

"It is true," admitted Misson. "Therefore I command thee, go!"

"I stay," she replied firmly. "In all else I am my lord's slave, but never again will I let him go into battle without me. Was not Zarfa beside her man on the *Victoire's* deck and so able to staunch the blood-flow after the cannon ball smote off his leg? Was I farther from thee? Did I show fear that day?"

"Not then nor ever. No man has greater courage and few more strength. Go, help them place the gun, and then hasten back to me."

"Useless—it can never be placed in time. That ship thy folly spared is upon us now."

As Aesa spoke, up went the flagship's helm, round swung her yards, and her starboard battery came to bear on the beach. Alternating grape and round-shot, she swept the strand and bombarded the water front. Houses were knocked to splinters; long lanes were cut through the palm grove, but there were, as yet, no casualties.

The two men in uniform and the tall woman in white, standing together in the open, seemed to draw more than one gunner's fire. But as long as Misson made no move toward taking cover, pride and love forbade Fairfax and Aesa to run away. The former, for his part, felt uncommonly foolish.

A ricocheting round-shot struck the beach beside him, covering his clothes and filling his eyes with a stinging shower of sand. Half blinded and greatly annoyed, he was rubbing the gritty stuff out of his eyes when he heard Aesa scream:

"They run! They run! Back, cowards, to your guns!"

When Fairfax was able to see again, he saw her half way to the Dockyard Battery. A gap in the topmost tier of sand-bags showed where the enemy's shot had toppled over part of the parapet on the heads of the garrison gunners. These were a rather mixed and inferior lot, for most of the best men were on the fleet. Consequently, the fall of the sand-bags started something like a panic.

Out of the open gorge of the redout bolted a group of runaways headed by a long-legged youth still clutching a forgotten sponge staff. He was abruptly reminded of its existence when Aesa pounced on him like a lioness on a rabbit. Tearing it out of his hand, she whirled him about and beat him across the shoulders with the sponge staff, driving him back before her.

Shamefaced, the rest turned and reentered the redout. Having herded them in, Aesa remained on guard in the gorge, brandishing the long, heavy sponge staff as if it were a switch, while she expressed her unflattering opinion of those inside.

"She is safer there," confided Misson thankfully, as he again turned his attention seaward. "That ship is standing in very boldly for a Portuguese. Some one aboard her seems to know our harbor very well."

THE warship was close inshore and coming closer, sweeping the beach with grapeshot as she came. There was no more danger of the defenders' deserting their batteries, now that the healthiest places on the beach were behind their massive ramparts. Both sides were banging away without hurting each other, for the shot and shell from the shore flew high over the trucks of the battleship's masts, while her grapeshot either buried themselves in the sand bags or whistled harmlessly over the empty strand.

Were they wasting all that good powder and lead merely in the hope of killing Misson, wondered Fairfax. Then suddenly he grasped the Portuguese admiral's highly unorthodox tactics, and realized their potency.

"Captain Misson," he said formally. "Instead of my remaining your prisoner, will you become mine? Let me most earnestly advise you to surrender yourself, your fleet, and your forts to me at once."

The Libertatian smiled and quoted—

" 'Pardon me, but I do not see the necessity.' "

"Because, sir, within a very few minutes your two batteries here will be in the enemy's hands, and their guns turned on your own hard-pressed fleet. That Portuguese man-of-war is about to run alongside or athwart the head of your wharf and make fast to it, as the *Victoire* did when you brought us here.

"You either should have destroyed the pier or else built a water-battery to defend it. Now, nothing can prevent that flagship from pouring her men ashore. Besides being very heavily manned, she has troops on board."

"I observe their cockades and cross belts on the fo'csle head," affirmed Misson coolly, as he felt in his left-hand coat-pocket. "That breach in the bulwarks forward should prove very convenient for debarkation. So you wish me to give myself up to you, rather than to these gentlemen from Goa. May I ask why?"

"Because from the Portuguese you have naught to hope for but a shameful death. But by saving all our lives in the *Scarborough*, you have earned the gratitude of the Honorable East India Company. I beseech you, my gallant friend, surrender yourself to me, its representative——"

"Pardon me for seeming to contradict you," interrupted Misson, drawing his sword. "But you are *not* the representative of the Honorable East India Company. Behold him!"

He pointed with the slender blade to where the first man was leaping down from the flagship's rail as she ranged up athwart the head of the pier. Lines had been thrown, but no one offered to spring down and make them fast, until this tall gentleman in civilian clothes led the way. It was Lord Mornington.

"Let us not speak of honor and gratitude in this person's presence," said Misson with cold contempt. "There is but one way to deal with such as he."

Clapping a boatswain's whistle to his lips, he blew a long, high-pitched call that cut through the roar of the firing. An answer came shrilly down the wind, but Fairfax failed to heed it, so dumbfounded was he by Lord Mornington's hostile return, in violation of his parole.

"For shame!" thought Fairfax. "Sooner than strike a blow under his command, I'll break my sword and throw it at his feet."

But my lord had plenty of other swords, besides pikes and bayonets, bristling and glittering at his back. The seamen had warped the flagship in until the breach in her forward bulwarks lay opposite the head of the wharf, and her bulging side was rubbing the barnacles off the piles. Because her topsides curved inward or "tumbled home," there was still a nine-foot gap between deck and stringpiece. But this was soon bridged with planks, down which scampered the landing-party.

First came a company of *caçadores*, swarthy, chunky little light-infantrymen in green coats, buff breeches and cross belts, black gaiters and feathered tricorns. Behind them stalked a company of Goannese sepoys, tall, reedy native Christians in fluttering white. A hundred seamen, armed with boarding-pikes and cutlases, completed the composite battalion.

Forming up rather raggedly on the wharf, they surged forward excitedly, with much cheering and bugling. As they did so, the after division of the flagship's starboard battery swept the beach with one last salvo of grape; then ceased firing, to avoid hitting the landing party, whose vanguard, led by Lord Mornington, was already halfway to the shore.

Echoing the Portuguese boatswain's piping of the "cease fire," Misson blew a different call on his own silver whistle. Sword in hand, he dashed down the beach and straight for the wharf, as if challenging the entire battalion to meet him in single combat.

"*Le Gran' Capitaine! Le Gran' Capitaine!*" roared the deep-chested, admiring shout of the Black Musketeers.

Held in reserve for just such an emergency, they had double-timed out through the landward gate of their guardhouse in the dockyard, *chuff-chuffing* silently across the soft sand outside the westward palisade to the rear of the Dockyard Battery. There, sheltered and hidden, they had chafed in silent fury, every dark eye fixed adoringly on Misson as he stood out there in the grape-swept open, every ear strained to catch the command of execution.

"Forward, the Black Musketeers!" shouted Sergeant Horn. "With the bayonet, charge!"

Waving them on with his halberd, he led them round the southwest angle of the Dockyard Battery and straight across the narrow fire-zone. So unexpected was their appearance and so swift their dash that before the battleship's startled gun crews could load and traverse their pieces, the Libertatians were too near and too directly in line with the landing party for a cannon ball to hit one column without first plowing a lane through the other.

The ship's gunners could not, and the Black Musketeers would not, fire a single shot. Superbly drilled, they kept their step and formation as perfectly as if on parade. In a compact column, eight abreast, the front rank with lowered points, the others at port arms, and the whole mass welded into one rippling, resilient battle-blade, they roared down the beach and out on the trembling wharf, to the lilt of their chanted war-cry—

*"Le Gran' Capitaine! Le Gran' Capitaine!"*

Caught out on the narrow pier, without time to retreat or space to deploy, the landing party's best tactics would have been to keep on advancing and work up speed for a counter-charge. But their officers, although Lord Mornington must have forewarned them of the Black Musketeers, seemed utterly astounded at encountering trained troops instead of a pirate rabble.

In vain did Lord Mornington exhort and wave them on. The Portuguese column slowed to a halt, while its officers were shrilly advising each other what to do next. Finally, the first platoon of *caçadores*, thirty strong, deployed from column of fours into a three-deep firing-line right across the wharf, the front rank kneeling, the third stepping up and aiming across the left shoulders of the second rank.

"Aiming," however, hardly describes the process, for by this time the wharf was creaking and swaying from side to side, as the Black Musketeers came pounding along it in swinging step, at a cadenced double-time. Rubbing and jostling against one another, the close-packed *caçadores* were tracing arcs and circles with their wabbling musket muzzles, when their captain cried—

*"Fogo!"*

At the word and before the first flash of the ragged volley, Misson threw himself flat on his face. He was near enough to have the back of his neck burned by falling powder grains, but the bullets sped harmlessly over him as he lay. Most of the balls flew high and wide; one, however, found its mark in the gallant heart of Sergeant Horn.

A savage yell for vengeance burst from the Black Musketeers. Leaping over their fallen leader, the raging warriors rushed through the lifting smoke and hurled themselves at the throats of those who had slain him.

Hampered by lack of elbow-room, the *caçadores* could not reload in time. They were still biting their cartridges, fumbling with their flint-locks or plying their ramrods, when out of the smoke flashed Misson's sword at the apex of a flying wedge of leveled bayonets. A spear-point of living steel, that phalanx hit the center of the Portuguese line and split it as a hatchet splits thin kindling.

Thrusting irresistibly through the gap, the solid column of black brawny giants crumpled up what was left of the Portuguese center and forced the survivors out toward the flanks, where already men were being shoved, shrieking, over the open edge of the pier. The impact of the shock ran through the narrower, slighter column halted behind what had been the firing line, buckling it up and driving it back on itself from front to rear.

ONCE started backward, the invaders were given no chance to recover and make a stand. Those inside the mass were wedged too tight to fire a shot or strike a blow. Those at the point of contact found themselves fighting furious giants armed with gigantic weapons, for Brown Bess and her bayonet far outreached the light Portuguese firelock and its puny blade. Despite the plucky rearguard stand of the *cacadores*, the retirement rapidly became a rout.

The Goannese sepoys were the first to break. They attempted to shoot their way through the sailors in their rear, who indignantly fell upon them with pike and cutlas.

This civil war raged bitterly for several minutes, until it seemed in danger of merging into the main conflict.

Then suddenly the seamen turned and tumbled aboard the ship. Disregarding their officers, they braced in the yards, cut away the bow and breast fasts and tried to haul in the improvised gangway. But there they were met and driven inboard by the bayonets of the sepoys, who kept crowding across even after the warps had been cast off or chopped through, and the ship was beginning to gather headway.

Away from the pier-head swung her bows, until the loose planks laid from deck to string-piece tilted and dropped eight or ten luckless sepoys into the widening strip of green water below. Their bayonets gashed horrible wounds in their comrades' bodies, as the wretched Goannese fell writhing and screaming down on the heads and shoulders of those who had been thrust off the wharf and had swum to the ship, where they were tearing the flesh from their fingers as they beat and clung to the barnacled plank-sheer, cursing, praying and beseeching those on deck to throw them a rope's end.

But little heed was paid to their prayers by those on board, whose only thought was to save themselves from the terrible Black Musketeers. Wider and wider grew the gap between the ship and the frantic throng on the pier-head. From within the mob came the report of a pistol; a sepoy sergeant dropped with the back of his skull blown in, two privates were shoved over the edge, and out on the place where they had stood shouldered Lord Mornington. Before their comrades could throw him over after the men he had murdered, he crouched and sprang from the string-piece.

It was a splendid leap, but the distance was too great. Falling short by three inches, Mornington struck the side of the ship just abaft the gap in the bulwarks, slid down the slope of the tumble-home, threw up a long arm, gripped the forechains, drew himself up to the channels and so climbed aboard.

Running before the wind, the fleeing flagship soon had the rocks and shoals of the south side of the harbor close under her forefoot. Round she hauled on the port tack, repassing the wharf within easy range of her port battery. But she forbore to fire, probably because the pier-head was crowded with prisoners whom Misson had saved from massacre.

Moreover, the Goa fleet had had its fill of fighting. Not only had the landing party been beaten off and the *Sao Paulo* sunk, but the fifty-gun ship at the head of the line had caught fire from the red-hot shot poured into her by the Dockyard Battery, and was blazing from stem to stern. Seeing this, and observing the flagship hauling off, the captains of the other two remaining Portuguese ships, that had been hotly engaged for over two hours with the *Victoire* and *Bijoux* abeam and the forts astern, decided not to miss the turn of the tide. The ebb was beginning to run—and so did they.

Breaking out their bower anchors, they swung with the wind until they were heading directly to leeward and away from the *Victoire* and the *Bijoux*, who most promptly and grievously raked them through the stern-windows. Cutting away the sheet anchors they had been riding to astern, the brace of beaten battleships came about on the port tack and scampered out through the harbor mouth as fast as they could sail. They wasted no time in returning the fire of the forts as they passed, nor did they wait outside for the flagship, but fled for the open sea, leaving their admiral to shift for himself.

Thus abandoned, the Portuguese flagship set all sail, while the Libertatians tried to cut her off. The *Victoire* and the *Bijoux* were to windward and nearer the harbor mouth, but their anchors were down, their topgallant masts housed, and their rigging badly cut up. Others had suffered worse, however, for the *Résolution* had not a spar left standing, and Drury's little *Surveillante* had been sent to the bottom.

The two home-built sloops, the *Enfance* and *Liberté*, were the first to slip their cables and give chase. As they did so, out from the dockyard darted a twelve-oar galley flying the lord conservator's flag; the *Liberté* ran down to leeward and took Misson aboard.

Before the two Libertatian frigates could get under way and head her off, the big Portuguese had won past them. With the ebb tide carrying her like a chip in a mill race, she swept in between the forts. Their gunners, aiming high, let drive at her top hamper with double salvos of flailing chain shot, that tore away half her running gear, ripped her three tall topsails to shreds, and left her mainyard dangling in the slings.

Thus crippled, the fugitive flagship was speedily overhauled. In the outer bay they clapped her aboard, the *Victoire* ranging up on her weather side, the *Bijoux* to leeward. Over the rail came Voix de Foudre and Tew at the head of their men, to meet an unexpectedly stubborn resistence. Led by their admiral and Lord Mornington, the Portuguese fought back to back, plying their pikes so sturdily that again and again they beat off the combined attacks of their veteran foes.

Then the *Enfance* and the *Liberté* came up and grappled the great ship on either quarter. Scrambling over the ornate balustrade of the admiral's walk, the men from the sloops brushed aside the handful of cabin servants and musketeers who tried to defend the stern windows, burst inboard, swept forward through the great cabin and out into the battle raging in the waist.

Misson was the first man out through the cabin door. Disregarding all else, he sprang forward to cross swords with Lord Mornington. The governor showed no reluctance to engage; on the contrary, he was smiling with unconcealed self-confidence. The deadliest swordsman in London, who had never yet lost a duel and more than once killed his man, Lord Mornington had only amused contempt for a rustic little provincial like Misson.

But before they had exchanged a dozen lunges and parries, my lord began to appreciate the difference between firm dry turf and blood-smeared planking that heaved and quivered underfoot, as the five interlocked vessels rolled, rubbed and banged together in the trough of a rising sea. His subtlest feints and swiftest ripostes were perpetually being interfered with and set at naught by this infernal jerking and jolting.

Even more disconcerting was the utter change that had come over Misson. The gentle, effeminate little dreamer, the trustful host and squire of lady's maids, now set his face like flint and returned Mornington's insolent stare with a look as hard and keen as the sword point with which he kept lunging for the other's eyes or throat or heart. Unmistakably bent on killing, Misson seemed as assured of his ability to kill as he was of keeping his footing on the slippery, rolling deck. The difference between the landsman and the seaman approximately equalized their skill in fence; the moral ascendency of Misson was turning the scale.

Absorbed in their duel, both forgot the battle swirling about them. Deprived of Mornington's leadership and hit on the flank by the onslaught of Misson's men, the flagship's crew were swept away from the bulwarks they had been defending so valiantly. They were driven forward to the fo'csle-head before they could rally, and by that time the men from the *Victoire* and the *Bijoux* were leaping down on the warship's deck in overwhelming numbers.

"Quarter!" cried some one among the Portuguese. "Will you grant us quarter?"

"Aye, good quarter," Tew assured them. "The same as we gave the crew of the *Bom Jesus*."

The Portuguese admiral looked to seaward, saw his two cowardly consorts making off under a press of sail, and said with sorrowful dignity—

"On those terms, I yield."

Glad of the opportunity, Lord Mornington threw down his weapon with the rest. Then he held out his hand to Misson, but the Libertatian neither took it nor did he smile.

"Monseigneur refuses to die by the sword," he said with icy disdain. "Let him be placed in irons."

## CHAPTER XII

### ON TRIAL

HAVING won the battle, the Libertatians treated their vanquished enemies as if they had been life-long friends.

"None of the prisoners were stripped," declared the History of the Pyrates, "and the officers, Misson, Caraccioli and Tew invited to their tables, treating them very civilly and extolling the courage they had shown in their defence. Unhappily, two prisoners were found on board who had sworn never to serve against them; these were clapped into irons and publicly tried for their perjury."

The trial was held in the new Parliament House on the south side of the Grande Place. Like most of the other public buildings in Libertatia, this consisted principally of a thatch roof and a deck-like floor. In front and along both sides, it was open except for canvas awnings, the posts supporting the roof and a stout rope looped from pillar to pillar, to serve as a railing. At the rear, a space had been walled in up to the level of the eves, and partitions run up to form several small cubicles that served as committee rooms and repositories for records and regalia.

This walled-off space had been promptly nicknamed "The Cabin," the open porch or lobby, "The Fo'csle" and the intermediate part, where the sessions were held, "The Waist." This was arranged somewhat after the fashion of the British House of Commons, with the benches running parallel to the length of the building and divided by a broad central gangway into two sets facing each other like two little grandstands looking across a miniature athletic field. Each side had seating room for fifty persons on five benches that rose one behind the other from the gangway to the awning that could be raised to give the legislators fresh air or lowered to protect them from wind and rain.

At the head of the gangway, a captured wardroom table served as a bar for the House and writing desk for the clerk to inscribe the enactments and proceedings into the big ledger long overdue at a business house in Goa and known as "The Logbook." Beyond the table and the ends of the benches ran a cross-gangway, past the front of a low platform built against the south wall of the chamber. On this platform stood three handsomely carved armchairs. The central seat was raised on a dais and covered with a crimson canopy. Above the chair on the right was painted a scroll and pen, in token that here sat the secretary of state; above the chair on the left hung a great gilt anchor for the lord high admiral. Surmounting these symbols of authority was a crude, vigorous wall painting of the Goddess of Liberty, with the motto: *"Pro Deo et Libertate."*

All three of the high officers of state were in their places, but only forty out of the sixty-two members of the House. Chosen captains of tens, they had proved themselves worthy and valiant decurions. Eight, including Sergeant Horn, had been killed in action, fourteen were still lying wounded in hospital or at home, and at least a dozen were wearing slings and bandages, among the forty who answered roll call.

The Portuguese admiral and his officers were present by invitation, that they might testify afterward that the trial had been fair. These were the only spectators admitted to the floor of the House, but the lobby and the open ground on both sides of the building were crammed with Libertatians, held back by ropes and cordons of Black Musketeers. A corporal and three privates of the same corps stood guard over the two prisoners.

Heavily ironed, the pair sat close together at the side of the table facing the clerk and the platform. Both prisoners had slept in their clothing for a week—and looked it. Their faces were dark with sprouting beard, but utterly different in expression. Lord Mornington stared about him with bold defiance; his companion, a lank, sallow, dispirited creature in a dirty naval uniform, never raised his eyes from the floor nor ceased to cross himself as best he could with his manacled hands, while his lips moved perpetually in whispered prayer.

The contrast was striking between the prisoners and Fairfax standing beside them, trim and soldierly in his old, well-brushed red coat. Since neither of the accused could speak the Libertatian *patois*, he had been accepted as their spokesman. In effect, although there were no lawyers in Libertatia, Fairfax was counsel for the defence.

Without any formal arraignment or pleading, Caraccioli opened for the prosecution. Calling many witnesses, he identified the prisoners as Edmund, Lord Mornington, reputed Governor of Madras, and Ruiz de Sousa, who had been sailing-master of the galleon *Bom Jesus* at the time she had been taken by the *Victoire*. The arrival of both of the accused in Libertatia, their taking the oath and signing the agreement not to serve against the republic within a year, and their subsequent hostile return before the expiration of their parole—these points Caraccioli established by oral and written testimony.

"That's a-plenty!" shouted Malachi Drury, buccaneer and Member of Parliament, when Caraccioli had shown and proved the accused men's signatures to the articles of parole. "Take 'em out and hang 'em!"

"Hang 'em!" echoed his fellow-members and the crowd in the lobby, who surged forward against the stout rope stretched across the head of the gangway until it creaked to the breaking-point.

Springing up from their chairs, the three officers of state motioned the mob back with upraised hands.

"For shame, citizens!" reproved Misson.

"This is a court of justice. Let us condemn no man unheard. Let us hear the other side of the case."

"Aye, let's hear the little lieutenant. Fairfax deals fair! Fingers, rap on the bar! Silence, for the honest lieutenant of Fiddler's Green!"

Omitting all honorifics and titles, for to use them would imply recognition of the Republic of Libertatia by his employer, the Honorable East India Company, Fairfax began:

"I admit the truth of every word my learned opponent and his witnesses have so far spoken. I admit your power to hold and judge and punish these two unfortunate gentlemen, my Lord Mornington and Senhor de Sousa. Furthermore, I admit the provocation that they have given you, in the matter of their parole.

"But although I admit your power, I deny your right. This assembly may call itself a court of justice, but no one can call it a court of law. For a court of law must derive its authority from a lawful government; one so recognized by the great nations of the world. I warn you, therefore, that if you yield to present clamors and venture to put these two gentlemen to death, no matter with what solemn forms and ceremonies of your own devising, such killing will be adjudged by the law of Portugal, the law of France and the law of England, to be no execution but plain murder."

The yell of resentment at this last word would have frightened most men into silence, but Fairfax stuck sturdily to his text.

"Furthermore," he continued, as soon as he could make himself heard, "even according to your own lawless laws, there can be no such thing as a legal hanging, or any other sort of capital punishment in Libertatia. Your civil and religious statutes sanction the taking of human life only by killing in open battle. Whether or not this place is a court of law, it most assuredly is not a battlefield. Therefore, I maintain that you are triply enjoined against such slaying, first by the law of Christendom, secondly by the law of Libertatia, and finally by my most learned and reverend opponent's own faith and creed—the Creed of Caraccioli."

"Blow the law!"

"Cut the dogs' throats and ha' done with it!"

"String 'em up! Keelhaul 'em! Masthead 'em naked at high noon! Set 'em adrift without water! Pelt 'em to death with empty bottles!"

Again Misson and his minister succeeded in stilling the tumult, the more easily because the crowd was anxious to hear Caraccioli's reply. The local *patois* proved too narrow to hold his eloquence, which flowed over frequently into French and Italian, but he made his meaning plain. His forehead dark with wrath, the ex-friar thundered as if denouncing from the pulpit the sins of an errant congregation.

"Torture! Who urges torture? What base-minded wretch would have our Libertatia sink to the vile practises of the law of England, of France, of Spain, of the Empire—of every so called Christian nation? Shall we crush prisoners to death because they refuse to plead? Shall we twist men's living sinews in the rack, break their bodies on the wheel, crush them in the boot, burn them with molten lead or pierce them with the spikes of the Iron Maiden? By the all-loving Father of Humanity, no!

"Nor shall we darken our sky with gibbets, on which to hang men—aye, and women and little children—for stealing a silver shoe buckle, or whispering some forbidden truth. We have seen enough of such black work in the lands that we have fled from to found this freeman's commonwealth in the uttermost part of the sea.

"That we may defend our republic against her foes, we recognize our right to meet and kill our enemies in open battle. But must we cleave the skull of the simple seaman who defends his deck like a man, yet spare his treacherous officer who, while a prisoner on parole, secretly charts our harbor that he may later pilot in a hostile fleet? Must we kill the lion and spare the serpent?

"And yet, my brethren, so detestable to me is all killing in cold blood, that even this base treachery of Ruiz de Sousa's could not persuade me to sanction his execution. But last night, while we in authority were discussing these matters very earnestly, Admiral Tew used such cogent reasons for an exemplary punishment, to deter others from like crime, that we must have been enemies to our own preservation not to follow his advice.

"These reasons the Lord High Admiral will now lay before you all."

CARACCIOLI sat down and Tew came forward with the air of one about to tackle an unpleasant job and get it done.

"Lads!" he shouted in his quarter deck voice that carried to the utmost edges of the listening crowd. "The little lieutenant has just reminded us that this place is not a battlefield. I'd like to remind him how mortal close it came to being one, that day when he stood in the lord conservator's doorway, a-watching us two bearing down on each other, with our people pressing behind, to settle our quarrel by the sword. But for the wit and wisdom of Caraccioli, there'd have been a bloody battle then, and no Parliament House, nor any Libertatia today.

"Now what put it into my head to hold back the women and demand the *Victoire*? What made me come ashore that morning and fasten a quarrel on Captain Misson in words no gallant gentleman like him could ever brook? Well, partly because I was drunk; drunk on wine and drunker than that on victory. Aye, laugh, lads, but what I've to say next will sober you. I tell you straight, that morning Tom Tew was one part drunk and three parts traitor!

"Who was it who so nigh cozened me into treason? Who called to my mind how Harry Morgan had tricked his comrades out of the plunder of Panama? Who told me that his father had been Morgan's go-between at court, to buy him the royal pardon and his knighthood from King Charles? Who craftily hinted that he could do as much for Tom Tew? Who offered to betray his queen to the king over the water? Who mazed my wits and mired me so deep that I durst not denounce him, but let him sign his parole and sail away—to break it? Who—aye, Lord Mornington!

"I'll say this much for Ruiz de Sousa: He's but a poor ignorant starveling of a sailing master, whose ship we took and whose messmates we slew before his eyes. But Lord Mornington is a peer of England. Lord Mornington is Governor of Madras. Lord Mornington's ship was sinking when Captain Misson came by and took him off. Lord Mornington was feasting at Misson's table when he fell a-plotting with me. Lord Mornington, were he twenty times a lord and forty times a governor, is a thankless, treacherous liar whose word no man can trust. Lord Mornington, though we have done him no ill and saved his life into the bargain, hath twice plotted our destruction. Lord Mornington, if we are simple enough to let him go again, will again strive to bring us to the gallows——"

"To the gallows with him!" interrupted a voice from the lobby. "His blood be upon his own head!"

"Hang him! Hang both of 'em!" shouted the crowd.

"But what be the law?" demanded Ned Ling, from his seat in Parliament. "I move the clerk read us the law of it, from the Logbook."

This sound suggestion was seconded and carried unanimously. The Clerk of the House, the lank-haired, silver-spectacled ex-schoolmaster of the *Victoire*, had already been freshening his memory on that point by flipping over the minutes of the last session with his left hand, while he took rough notes on scratch-paper with his right.

"Concerning capital punishment," he reported drily, "the law is silent. No bill has been introduced nor statute enacted, touching that matter, to date."

"Then, my Lord Conservator," asked Ling, "what be us to do?"

"That," pronounced Misson, like a judge instructing the jury, "is a matter for you, the representatives of the people, sitting as the High Court of Parliament, to decide among yourselves. The law neither requires nor forbids capital punishment, but leaves you free to inflict such penalties as you deem fit. You have to consider these two things only: The evidence in the case and the good of the republic.

"Ordinarily, you would decide, first, on whether or not the prisoners are guilty as charged. Their advocate having admitted their guilt, however, it remains only to fix the sentence.

"Ruiz de Sousa, stand up. Have you anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?"

Misson repeated this question in passable Portuguese, as the guards helped the prisoner rise and stand. But the dazed Ruiz only stared blankly and continued to whisper prayers.

"Edmund, Lord Mornington, stand up. Have you anything to say why sentence should not be passed upon you?"

"My neck for yours," answered Mornington defiantly. "Lieutenant, read them the letter."

"What is this communication?" asked Misson. "And why has it not been offered in evidence before?"

"This is a letter from the Governor of Bombay to my Lord Mornington, then at Goa," explained Fairfax, producing and unfolding the document. "My lord had it in an inner pocket when he was captured, and gave it to me that night, when I came to consult with him about his defence at this trial. We have been loth to make this letter public, because it contains important military secrets. But since you seem bent on my lord's destruction, the time has come for a revelation and a warning. Have I your permission to read this letter aloud?"

"In your personal opinion, is the document genuine?"

"On my honor, yes," declared Fairfax.

"Then proceed," directed Misson.

No one protested. All listened eagerly as Fairfax read:

Government House, Bombay,
December 9, 1713.

To ye Rt. Hon'ble Lord Mornington,
Gov'r of Madras, now resident at Goa,

I am greatly rejoict to hear of your double delivery from shipwreck and the Madagascar pyrates. But as for my joining forces with yourself and the Goa fleet to scour ye rogues out, it is clear impossible, for I have not so much as a gallivat to spare. My own yacht, together with ye *Anne* ketch from Carwar, has been taken by the Mahratta rovers of Conajee Angria, who is now grown so strong that his fleet attacks our stoutest Indiamen within sight of Bombay. What with these and ye European Pyrates of Madagascar, matters are grown so intolerable that at last the Directors have prevailed over the reluctance of the Admiralty to send Queen's ships East of ye Cape. They have lately informed me that a strong squadron is to be sent out next summer, to sweep the Indian Ocean clear of all pyrates and their pestilent settlements. Pending ye arrival of that fleet, I strongly advise your remaining at Goa.

Pray give my profoundest respects to Lady M.

Sir, I have the honour to remain,
Y'r very ob't, humble serv't,
William Aislabie
President, Bombay Presidency.

"Aye, the Queen's fleet is coming," repeated Fairfax, as the dismayed whisper ran through the room and the crowd outside. "Within a few months you will have to deal with a British admiral. Think how thankful you'll be then to have a British peer and governor for a prisoner, when you try to bargain for terms. Consider that, when you presume to pass sentence upon him. Consider also how valuable every other captured officer, including Senhor de Sousa and myself, will be for hostages. Let me adjure you, in the words of Scripture, judge not that ye be not judged."

"These matters should be and doubtless will be, given due consideration," said Misson. "Above all, let us consider, without fear or malice, the welfare of the republic. Let us now withdraw and leave the members of the High Court to their deliberations."

The room was cleared of every one except the forty members of Parliament, who debated hotly and heavily for the next hour and three-quarters. At the end of that time, word was sent out that a decision had been reached. The crowd streamed in, the prisoners were led back to the dock, the officers of state resumed their seats, and Malachi Drury pronounced the judgment.

"We don't need any Portygee hostages, for we can whip 'em any day. Let their admiral and all his officers, except Ruiz de Sousa, take the twelvemonth's oath and go. Let Lieutenant Fairfax do the same if he wants to, though we'll be sorry to lose him.

"As a warning to those we are setting free, let a gallows be built at the point of each fort. Hang Ruiz de Sousa on one of these, as soon as his ship's chaplain can shrive him. Keep the other gallows ready for Lord Mornington, in case the Queen's admiral refuses to sheer off or to grant us good quarter. Against that time, let Lord Mornington be kept in double irons, in a dungeon cell."

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE FLIGHT

"ZOUNDS! What's that?"

Six months of solitary confinement had soured Lord Mornington's already sullen temper, but weakened his old, insolent self-sufficiency and disdainful calm. His nerves were not what they had been, a year before, when he had stood unperturbed and sneering on the deck of the sinking *Scarborough*. Now, at a little sound in the night, he cried out like a startled girl.

"What's that?" he repeated more loudly.

"Sh-h-h!" hissed a warning voice outside his prison window. "Sh-h, ye fool!"

Straw rustled and fetters clinked in the darkness, as the prisoner turned on his elbow to stare across the cell at the dim square of starlight, cut into three upright panels by the two stout window bars. Across this familiar field curved a strange, thick line that writhed and wriggled.

"A snake!" gasped Mornington, half to himself and half aloud. "They're thrusting in a poisonous serpent!"

Again the man outside warned him to be silent. With two huge hands, he grasped the stout rope that Mornington's sleepy eyes had mistaken for a snake, wound it in and out and knotted it securely to the middle of both bars.

"What are you doing that for?" whispered Lord Mornington.

"Hold your tongue and put on your shoon," rumbled the man outside. "Stand clear o' the window."

Tying a final knot, he went away. His receding footsteps, crunching through the sand, reminded Mornington that he could no longer hear the regular tread of the Black Musketeer on duty, walking post around and around the little one-room prison. The sentry had been disposed of, and some one was trying to remove the window bars and help him escape!

Swinging his feet to the floor, Mornington pulled up the stockings he had rolled down to pad his leg-irons while he slept, and fumbled about for his shoes. He was buckling the second shoe buckle, when he felt the shelf-bed he was sitting on begin to quiver and shake. The wall it was built against, the floor underfoot, the whole side of the stout log-cabin rose up an appreciable fraction of an inch from its foundation piles; then settled abruptly down again.

A peculiar creaking and twanging next drew Mornington's attention to the window. To his astonishment, he saw the thick wrought-iron bars being bent outward as if they had been soft lead, by the pull of the stout hemp cable.

"An army must be tugging that line," he thought in bewilderment, "or else, an elephant. Do they have elephants in Madagascar?"

Fascinated, he watched the bars curving into crescents. Their lower ends, drawn out of their sockets, scraped splintery furrows across the oaken sill, flew free and were bent up nearly to the horizontal before the knotted rope's end slipped off and vanished into the darkness.

In through the window thus unbarred wormed a huge bulk that blotted out the stars. Dropping on his hands, the invader shifted ponderously, yet silently, to his feet and crossed to where Mornington stood up to welcome him.

"Who are you?" whispered the prisoner eagerly. "Did Mr. Fairfax send you? Has the British fleet—umph!"

Without a word, the stranger had placed the flat of his mighty palm on Mornington's mouth and pushed. Strong man though he was, my lord sat down again on the shelf-bed with the back of his head pressed hard against the cabin wall by the heel of the other's hand on his bearded lips. He felt his captor paw the bedding about with his one free hand, gather up a fold of the blanket that Mornington was sitting on, and then rip the stout woolen fabric as if it were rotten silk.

"Tark too much," observed the giant, as he gagged him with the torn-off fragment. Shredding more of the blanket into strips, he wound them about the manacles and leg-irons, until they could neither clink nor jingle. When satisfied that Mornington could make no manner of noise, the big man picked him up, carried him across the cell, raised him shoulder-high and thrust him feet foremost out through the unglazed window.

Mornington made a good landing, then swayed, overbalanced and fell helpless at full length on the sand. Presently his strange rescuer dropped down beside him. Without any explanation or apology, he gathered Lord Mornington up again, slung him across one shoulder and carried him away.

Hanging head downward, Mornington could see nothing of where he was being taken; he could judge only by sounds. Very soon he heard the creaking of the vanes overhead, as they passed the Dutch windmill that he used to watch every day from his prison window. Next he smelled the mixed savors of ale, rum and barbecued beef, and heard the crash of a ten-strike in the skittle alley back of Fiddler's Green. By these indications he knew that he was being taken down an unfrequented path through the palm grove, parallel with and south of Victory Road, shoreward to the southern end of the beach.

Pausing only to shift his burden from the right shoulder to the left, the giant lugged him down across the strand and out into thigh-deep water, where the baby waves playfully slapped Mornington's downward hanging face. Half drowned with the salt water up his nostrils, half choked with the rush of blood to his head, he was on the verge of apoplexy when he was abruptly reversed and plumped down on the bottom-boards of a boat with his back resting against the edge of a thwart.

"Well done, Ned," muttered some one whom Mornington, with his eyes full of water, could not see. "Give us a shove-off."

Impelled by the giant's mighty arm, the boat shot from the shore. Blinking the water out of his eyes, Mornington found himself in the stern-sheets of a ship's jolly-boat. Facing him, pulling a muffled stroke-oar, sat Chips, the crabbed old carpenter of the *Scarborough*, now a master shipwright in the dockyard of Libertatia. A tall young black boy was rowing bow. There was no one at the helm, but, guided by the shorelights, Chips was heading her straight for the mouth of the harbor.

The roadstead struck Mornington as being uncommonly empty. He could make out the bare yards of a big ship lying alongside the wharf, and the riding-light on the one vessel that lay at anchor: A long, lean gallivat of the Malabar type, as he could see when they passed close by her. But the rest of the Libertatian fleet was apparently either undergoing repair at the dockyard or out on a cruise.

Marking the middle of the harbor, the masts of the sunken *Sao Paulo* rose out of the water like three dead trees in a flooded field, their yardarms crowded with sleeping seafowl. Off this dolorous spot, Chips rested on his oar.

"Weigh enough!" he ordered the black boy. "In oars, step mast and up sail."

The lug-sail set, Chips came aft and shipped the rudder. As he settled himself at the helm, with Mornington's head and shoulders between his spread knees, the shipright passed something to the black boy.

"File off his leg-irons, Tsuba."

Squatting on the bottom-boards Tsuba filed away. Except for the rasping of the tiny teeth on the hard iron and the rippling of the water at her bows, the jolly-boat sailed on in silence. In vain Mornington tried to attract the others' attention to his gag and induce them to take it out.

The file at last bit through one side of the center link of the ankle chain. Pulling the lips of the cut apart with his powerful hands, Tsuba unhooked the link, and hung it carefully behind his left ear. Mornington sat up and held out his manacles to be severed in the same way, but Chips pulled him back.

"No time now," he whispered roughly. "Lie still for your life. Tsuba, down mast and sail."

WHEN the lug sail had been struck, half burying him in folds of canvas, Mornington saw the reason why. They were approaching the harbor mouth and about to run the gantlet of the forts on either hand. Fort Indépendance, on his left, looked dark and deserted, as if its small garrison had rowed over to join the merry party across the way.

They were singing "Jean Bart" around a driftwood campfire that was sending its sparks high above the ramparts of Fort République, lighting up the square embrasures like cabin windows and thrusting out through them long, flickering beams of firelight to redden the dark waters below.

The ebb tide was running like a river out through the narrow harbor mouth. Crouched on the bottom-boards, with one skinny hand holding the tiller, old Chips craftily steered the drifting jolly-boat close in by the southern shore, right under the guns and hidden by the black shadow of the fort itself.

Those on board her could distinctly hear the crackling of the burning driftwood, the clink of pannikins and the voices of the men about the fire.

"Pass t'other bowl of punch!" said somebody with authority in his tones. "This beats blackbirding at Old Calabar."

"Down the river of Gambia,
  Old Ca-la-bar."

The rest took up the doleful slavers' song:

"Down the river of Gambia,
  Old Calabar,
White men are dying,
  At Old Calabar;
Black men are dancing,
  At Old Calabar,
  Oh-ho-ho—
Down the river of Gambia,
  Old Calabar."

The deep, slow chant made Mornington shudder as he drifted by. The narrow tidal strait seemed like a river, the river of Gambia, the River of Death. The clean salt air seemed to reek of human carrion. High overhead clanked ghostly fetters.

Half expecting to see the hovering specters of murdered slaves Mornington turned his head and saw, stark and terrible against the soft beauty of the starlight night, above the bastion of the fortress opposite, a dead man hanging from a gallows.

It was the corpse of Ruiz de Sousa, tarred and ironed and left to swing like Captain Kidd at Execution Dock. Nearer at hand, directly above him as he lay shuddering in the bottom of the boat, Lord Mornington could see the cross-beam of the other gallows, his own gallows, waiting for him.

"Down the river of Gambia,
Old Calabar,
White men are dying,
At Old Cala——"

*Boom!*

"Hark! What was that, mates?"

"A swivel gun, up-wind. There goes another!"

"What's wrong in town, I wonder? Let's have a look."

The ex-slaver from Old Calabar drained his pannikin, quit the fireside for the westward wall, climbed up on a gun carriage and whistled like a small boy.

"The beach is a-crawl with lights!" he shouted. "Boats pulling off to the new gallivat! Tew's Tower's signaling, flash and bell!"

The great poop lantern winked as its shutters opened and closed in time with the bell strokes that came clearly down the wind.

"Four bells! Close the harbor! To the guns! Touch off that cresset!"

A brand from the campfire was thrust up into the rusty iron basket on an iron post stuck into the seaward parapet. Tar-soaked shavings and kindling flared up with a roar, turning the running tide-rip into a river of blood, painting a mocking grin on the dead man's face, and flushing rose-red the rising, fluttering lug-sail of the jolly-boat, a long musket shot to seaward.

"Boat ahoy! Put back or we fire!"

A twenty-four pounder thundered from Fort République, but its ball flew high and wide. That was the only loaded gun that could be brought to bear; by the time fresh charges had been fetched from the magazine, the lug-sail had melted into the night.

A shark-nosed gallivat, lateen-rigged and pulling twelve oars a side, with a long brass swivel-gun gleaming wickedly in her bows, foamed into the circle of firelight. Malachi Drury, straddling the narrow poop, stopped exhorting the rowers long enough to hail the fort—

"Mornington's got away in a boat! Hast seen him?"

"Aye, running for open sea."

"He'll never reach it!" roared Malachi Drury. "Reeve me a halter to his gallows, 'gainst our return!"

Hot and vengeful, the gallivat leaped forth in eager chase.

## CHAPTER XIV

### THE FALSE TRAIL

DIPPING the lug and coming about as soon as the darkness hid them, Chips ran down to the southward until he found the patch of white sand he was looking for on the western side of the outer bay. There the boat was beached long enough to debark Lord Mornington, Tsuba, and Chips' clothes. Naked and all but eaten alive by mosquitoes, the old carpenter neatly scuttled the stone-ballasted jolly-boat in seven fathom water, without leaving a trace of flotsam, and swam ashore.

"Lead on, Tsuba," growled Chips, as soon as he was dressed again. "You're the pilot now."

Tsuba accordingly led the way up the beach and into the woods. At first their way ran through coco groves, with scant undergrowth and clean sand underfoot. But soon enough the three men were struggling through muck and mire, tripping over creepers, scratched, torn, bitten, soaked and blinded with their own sweat, as they hacked their way through the matted, pitch-black jungle.

Tsuba was entirely at home. His calloused bare feet felt their way like hands, his arms moved rhythmically before him, almost as if he were swimming. Thrusting out his left hand, he would gather, bend aside and hold taut an armful of greenstuff to be severed clean by a single draw-cut of his heavy, straight-bladed hanger. Behind him, Chips was slashing ten times as hard and making twenty times as heavy weather of it. Last of all staggered Lord Mornington, still gagged and led like a dancing bear by a lanyard lashed to his manacles and twisted round the carpenter's left wrist.

Abruptly they burst out of the jungle like men stepping out of a hot-house door into the open air. Before them and on either hand stretched an endless plain of gritty volcanic soil tufted with thick clumps of long, withered grass that swished drily against their ankles as they walked. Straight across this drought-stricken plain Tsuba continued to lead the way, until he came to a foot path running at right angles to their course.

Standing in the path, Tusba turned and pointed toward the north, where a great star burned low in the sky, above a twinkling constellation of lesser luminaries.

"Tew's Tower, and the lights o' Libertatia," said Chips with satisfaction. "Well done, Tsuba."

He added some words in the Libertation *patios*, which Mornington failed to understand. Then, passing the cord over to the black boy, as casually as if there were nothing more than a pariah dog on the other end of the string, Chips grunted, "G'night, Tsuba," and stumped away toward town.

Hardly respectful behavior on the part of a lowly ship's carpenter, toward the Governor of Madras! Lord Mornington thought of a number of things he would have liked to remark on the subject. But, gagged and manacled, all he could do was to follow along at the end of the leash when Tsuba started south.

Hours and hours and ages and aeons afterward, they saw far ahead of them a speck of light. Another eternity, and they were near enough to see that it was a small camp-fire. Tsuba gave a deep, musical call, the first word that he had spoken that night. A young man in sailor's clothes jumped up beside the fire and waved a welcome. It was Harry Fairfax.

"What on earth?" he gasped, as the firelight revealed the gag. "Here, let me take this out of your mouth, my lord."

That camp-fire was nine and a quarter miles from the city limits of Libertatia, but even so, it seemed as if Lord Mornington's roar of rage, when Fairfax removed the gag, must have been audible at Fiddler's Green. His first word shattered the law against blasphemy; what followed was foul enough to make a buccaneer blush.

He was suddenly silenced, in the midst of a crackling curse, by a tin cup full of very hot coffee tilted between his lips.

"Drink this, my lord," urged Fairfax. "And spare your breath, sir, for you have a long night march before you yet."

Mornington replied, between gulps and in language much hotter than the coffee, that he would not stir another thrice-adjectived step. He mentioned the tenderness of his feet after six months' close confinement, and told what his shoes felt like, after wading through that double-dashed Plutonian swamp. He sat down creakingly and demanded the instant removal of his manacles.

"Tsuba!" called Fairfax.

But the black boy was too good a judge of tones and tempers. He had long since tactfully placed the file where the firelight was brightest and betaken himself to where the outer darkness was most dark. Fairfax began to ply the file himself.

"Of course, you may remain, my lord, if you insist on our both being hanged."

"Blood and 'ouns! The sentence was——"

"Aye, by a brace of votes. Forgive my cutting you short, my lord, but time presses. In brief, a strong faction in Libertatia favors putting you to death forthwith, and that faction is for the present in control. Misson has taken the sloops to go for a cruise with his princess among the isles. Van Ghent is out with the *Bijoux*, on a cruise round the Cape, while Tew has taken the *Victoire* southward to drum up recruits at St. Mary's.

"However, since Caraccioli still remained in command, and knowing him as I do, I thought I could take Tsuba and go out for a little pig-sticking. We've had very good luck."

He jerked his head toward a bristling bulk that lay on the other side of the fire. The size of it surprized Mornington into making the first polite speech he had spoken for many a month.

"Name of Nimrod, Lieutenant! Dids't spear that monstrous warty boar afoot?"

"There are no horses in Madagascar, sir," answered Fairfax, apologetically. "There was no danger, for Tsuba was at hand with the gun, in case I had missed my thrust. I'd killed the boar and we were cutting him up, when we spied a long-legged black boy jog-trotting toward our camp here.

"It was Tsuba's blood-brother Ngasu, who works for Ned Ling the butcher. Both of these blacks are famous trackers, and he'd had no trouble running us down. Honest Ned had sent him to me with a note, writ by Sheer Hulk with the pencil clenched in his teeth, a note full of bad tidings.

"It seems that the stump of Caraccioli's leg has become inflamed again, and brought him to bed with a high fever. Till he recovers, the ruler of Libertatia is the senior captain in port, and that is Malachi Drury, the buccaneer."

"I remember him," said Mornington grimly.

"And he remembers you, my lord. Drury once sailed with Captain Kidd. No, not in the *Adventure Galley*, but before that, privateering against the French. He has always insisted that Kidd was sacrificed to save his noble patrons, but not until very lately has Drury seemed to have realized that you, my lord, were among them.

"Even with that incentive, Drury durst not openly defy the law of Libertatia, lest Misson call him to account on his return. But being in authority, Drury first ordered the guard withdrawn from the prison, under the pretext that it was no longer needed, and then he dropped a hint to the baser sort who skulk ashore while their betters go to sea.

"Ling, Sheer Hulk, and their honest cronies soon smelled out what was afoot, but they were too few to put a stop to the business. All was arranged for you to be haled before a mock court tonight, my lord, and hanged.

"Ling had Sheer Hulk write me that you were a doomed man, and that I must flee and hide in the Antankara country until Misson's return. I stole the meat of his idea and sent it back with a little seasoning. Ngasu bore the word, while Tsuba hid out in the bush till nightfall, then slipped round to where Chips was waiting with the jolly-boat, in which he'd fetched a cable from the dockyard. As soon as Ned Ling had knotted one end of the great rope to your prison bars, Chips, having made t'other end fast to the axle of the windmill, loosed the sails and let them wind it up."

"Who thought of that brave device?" demanded Mornington.

"Once I saw a great siege gun thus being drawn out of a bog hole at a miry cross-road in Flanders as our regiment marched by," admitted Fairfax. "So, my lord, these honest fellows have not only brought you here safely, if somewhat roughly, but they have left a false scent to seaward, that will keep Drury busy scouring the coast in his gallivat and looking for the ship which he will feel sure must have picked you up.

"In the meanwhile, my lord, your only refuge is with the Antankara."

"Those savages to the southward?"

"Yes, my lord. Have no fear, for as long as they mistake you for a Libertatian, they'll treat you very civilly. A party of cattle-buyers from the town ventured last month as far as the nearest Antankara village, where they were most handsomely entertained. This village, they told me, is plainly visible from the southward side of Mount Amboita."

"The Sacred Mountain?"

"Aye, so they call it. You can not miss it, my lord, even though you lose the foot path. Keep to the path if you can, however, for it leads past the only water hole. Here is a small flask of brandy and water, my flint and steel, and enough roast pork and biscuits to last you the journey. Throw away the remnants before you enter the village, for the Antankara hold pig flesh unclean and despise the eaters thereof. Here's the spare boar spear, but I can't let you have the gun, sir—"

"Why not?"

"Its absence would be too surely noted on my return."

"Return? Great Bedlam, man, you're not going back to Libertatia!" protested Lord Mornington with perfect sincerity. "After this, they'd murder you on sight."

Fairfax shook his head.

"They have no quarrel with me, sir—and I have too many friends among them. I'll come back in seeming innocency from the hunt, and Drury's crew will keep on hunting you to seaward. But if I failed to return by tomorrow, then they'd suspect, look to the landward, and catch us both."

"Unless we push on through to—to—Isn't there a French fort somewhere on this cursed island?"

"Fort Dauphin?"

"Aye, that's the place!" cried Mornington. "How far away is that?"

"A thousand miles and forty years, my lord."

"Forty *years*?" frowned the bewildered Mornington.

"Aye, since the destruction of Fort Dauphin. The savages rose against the cruel tyranny of the French governor, swarmed over the walls at night, and slew him with all his luckless garrison. Since then, there has been but one other European settlement in Madagascar, and that is Libertatia," answered Fairfax.

"What about this St. Mary's place where Tew has gone?"

"Oh, that is on an islet somewhere off the east coast; a haunt of downright pirates, without pretence of law or decency."

"Then there is actually no other port in all this vast island where I could flee and take ship?" persisted the sceptical Lord Mornington.

"The only port is Libertatia, the only ships are pirate ships, and your only refuge is with the Antankara. Beyond their south ward borders dwell their bitter tribal foes, the Sakalava, who would murder any one who had been the Antankara's guest.

"There is no escape for either of us, my lord, by land or water until either the Queen's fleet comes to rescue us or Misson sets us free."

## CHAPTER XV

### ON THE SACRED MOUNTAIN

QUITTING Fairfax's camp two hours before sunrise, Lord Mornington spent the whole of the next day covering the dozen miles to the water hole at the foot of Mount Ambohita. Close confinement had softened his leg muscles, rendered his soles as tender as a baby's, and generally unfitted him for the trail.

Before the sun was an hour high, it had blistered Mornington's cell-bleached skin and burned it as red as a soldier's coat. Luckily, there was plenty of fat on the pork roast that Fairfax had given him, and he rubbed and basted himself until he glistened. Presently the stuff turned rancid.

The back of his neck and most of his face were protected by a matted, unkempt, six months' growth of hair and beard. Having no hat, he bound his head pirate fashion with his bandanna handkerchief. His linen shirt and breeches had been torn to tatters and crusted with dried slime from the swamp and blood from his own plentiful scratches, the whole sifted over with the dust of a long journey.

Lord Mornington needed no manner of certification to assure the Antankara that he was a Libertatian. Armed with the sawed-off boarding-pike that Fairfax had used for pig-sticking, my lord was the most ferocious looking pirate that had ever set foot in Madagascar.

He removed the last evidence of his late captivity by filing off his anklets and handcuffs, as he sat in the shade of a clump of raffia palms during the midday heat. The severed links and fragments of gyves he fitted together into a roughly circular mass of scrap iron, bound it with some of his fluttering rags, and stowed the bundle of junk in the bottom of the bread bag, beneath the pork and the pantiles.

Why any one should care a farthingsworth for such rubbish baffled Lord Mornington's understanding. But Fairfax had assured him that the Antankara would indeed value it highly, and my lord was beginning to admit to himself that the little lieutenant was not always a fool.

Toward sundown, he limped wearily up to the hoof-trampled margin of the water hole fed by the extensive seepage of the mountainside above it. He built a fire, beside which he sat up most of the night, clutching his spear and ready to fight for his life against the swarming wild beasts that lurked just outside the circle of firelight, stamping and squealing and bellowing, their bodies looming monstrously, their eyes gleaming like red coals out of the darkness.

Mornington no longer wondered whether or not there were elephants in Madagascar. He counted three large herds of them, interspersed with lions, buffalo, dromedaries, leopards, hippopotami, gray wolves, black bears and man-eating tigers of the largest size. About three o'clock in the morning, after the last thirsty wild pig and humpbacked cow had worked cautiously round him to snatch a drink at the water hole, he stopped straining his eyes and his imagination and fell asleep.

The sun rose red and wrathful in a leaden, lifeless sky. Even a landsman whose only voyaging had been as a cabin passenger could not help sensing the approach of a storm.

"I must push on around the mountain and reach that village before the tempest bursts," thought Mornington, as he made his cheerless breakfast. "Blood an' ouns! The pork's full of ants!"

Using his spear for a shaft, he pushed on up the sparsely-wooded mountainside. He found the ascent much easier than he had feared, for the deep-trodden trail and its numberless side paths had been laid out by a surveyor who has no equal when it comes to judging slopes and finding the easiest grades, and that is—the grazing cow. Up the south side of Ambohita the main trail wound its way to about two thousand feet above the sea, where it reached a zone of steep, rocky ground, near the base of which the trail swung to the eastward.

There Mornington rested, to get his breath and look down at the whole northern tip of Madagascar spread out before him like a colored map. The plain he had just crossed was brickish red, mottled with the pale yellowish brown of dead grass and brush, for the dry season was at its height. A thin green margin of swamp and jungle outlined both coasts, as they ran together to form a great arrow-head, whose point was Cape Amber, and its shaft the narrow isthmus between a nameless gulf on the west coast and the head of Libertatia Bay.

Beyond to the far horizon stretched the Indian Ocean, the brilliance of its wonted blue now dulled and tarnished under the gray sky that was blackening to the westward with the hot, dry gale that was coming out of Africa. Beating up against the puffs and catspaws of the advancing storm, a tiny vessel was making for the harbor.

Lord Mornington smiled sardonically, as he realized that this must be the gallivat coming back from hunting him.

"Satan sink you to perdition!" he cursed the craft and crew. "Likewise the sloops and the *Victoire* and the rest of your thieving, murdering pirate fleet. May this storm catch and sink you, every one!"

With this parting prayer, and a last look round the empty horizon, he turned and trudged on down the trail to Antankaraland. Soon he had swung round the curve of the great volcanic cone, and lost sight of the desolate northern plain. Instead, he now looked down on increasing numbers of trees, groves, and widening belts of forest that grew more luxuriantly and closer together with every mile, until they merged into one solid mass of treetops, one unbroken sweep of-the most magnificent tropic jungle; a great green sea that rose and fell, swayed and surged, inland from the beach up to within a gun-shot of where he stood on the mountainside, and stretched southward into the haze of the far horizon. Giant baobabs thrust up their ragged heads, traveler's trees waved tattered fans a hundred feet in the air, where little gray-headed green parrots tore past in screaming hundreds, flashing for an instant in the sun, then diving down into the mysterious, twilight underworld.

"How monstrously dreary," sighed the exiled Londoner. "Lud, when shall I see Will's coffee house again? How long must I keep following this cursed, crooked cow path?"

Impatiently he swung around the next corner, where the level trail looped about a wide hollow curving deep into the mountain side. Abruptly the path became broader, where the living rock had been quarried away, unmistakably by human hands.

Surprized and interested, Lord Mornington studied the methods and tools of the primitive quarrymen. On top of an outcrop of gneiss, intersected by vertical veins of mica, they had very recently built a long fire of cow-dung, then dashed it out with water. This sudden cooling had split off the face of the rock along a mica vein, in a long, smooth slab about four feet wide and four or five inches thick. With wooden levers and wedges, the ingenious savages had pried the slab away, broken and dressed it with rough stone hammers into pieces of suitable length, and carried these off on stout branches upheld by many bearers, the prints of whose broad, bare feet were still distinct in the dry, mica-spangled dust.

Following the direction of these footprints, Mornington beheld a sight that made his heart thump and stand still.

"The tombs of the kings!" he gasped. "The tombs of the kings!"

* * *

GROUPED together in the center of the mountain meadow at the head of the hollow, backed by the majestic summit of Ambohita and looking down over the jungle and out to sea, were many rows of low, oblong sepulchres built of slabs of stone. Mornington's memory flew back to his first glimpse of Ambohita rising out of the sea, when he had stood on the *Victoire's* quarter deck and heard Misson declare that this was the sacred mountain where for centuries the Antankara had buried their kings.

"There they sleep, those savage monarchs, each in his rude stone tomb, with all his treasure about him."

Treasure! His share in sending out Captain Kidd, his dicing and double dealing, his marrying and bribing his way to a governorship, his plots, perjuries and desperate stratagems that had brought hundreds to death and made him an outcast from among the outlaws—all these dark and devious devices were sprung from the same desire, the lust for unearned gold.

Gold! Here was gold! His life-long dream had come true. His heart began to pound like the pumps of a sinking ship, sending the blood racing through his veins, and with it, new life that lent his weary, prison-cramped limbs a madman's feverish strength.

He had found it at last, not merely a buried treasure but a whole cemetery of golden graves. There should be treasure enough here to freight a galleon as deep as the battered *Bom Jesus* had been laden, when she wallowed under the *Victoire's* lee, while Misson was speaking courteous, idle words that Mornington would never forget—

"They boast that their King Rafangoro is the richest king in the world, even though he has inherited nothing from his ancestors, since each of them had taken all his wealth with him to the tomb."

"All his wealth with him to the tomb," whispered Mornington exultantly, as he broke into a lope like a starved hyena. "That new one, the white one, the big one, must be Rafangoro's himself."

Obviously it was too newly built to belong to any one's ancestor. Flies were still buzzing about the thirty or forty ox skulls stuck on stakes driven into the fresh-turned earth around the sepulchre; more flies blackened the air above the bone-filled barbecue pits where an army of mourners had lately feasted. The tomb itself, a simple little rectangle of stone slabs, some eight feet long by half as wide and high, that reminded Mornington of an English dog kennel, was gleaming with a thick, wet coat of spotless new stucco.

"Sealed!" he snarled bitterly. "Can't open it without betraying— Hallo, what's that white stuff over there in the ground?"

Three strides, and he was looking down into the ashes of the fire where lumps of reef coral had been burned for lime. Beside it, the pit hole in the clay where they had mixed the stuff with cow's hair, sand and water, was still a third-full of plaster, with a crude paddle sticking out of it. A little probing with a stout twig cracked the dry, dust-filmed surface, and revealed gallons of fresh, moist stucco underneath.

"Mixed yesterday, I'll warrant," exulted Mornington. "I'll have that door slab out in five minutes, and then put it back as fairly whitened as it is now."

He looked about him, but the wide landscape seemed emptier than ever.

His spear point probed the half inch crack between the door slab and its frame, slicing away the soft, sandy mortar and pushing it back inside. Soon he had cleared both sides and was working his way across the top. As he neared the upper left hand corner, out came a piece of stone half the size of his head, where a corner of the door slab had been broken off in the shaping, then stuck in again to plug the hole.

"There's the key hole," chuckled Mornington, in high spirits, "and here's the key!"

He thrust in the larger end of one of these twelve-foot branches on which the stones had been carried from the quarry, lifted the smaller end and thrust it before him in an arc that brought him around until he was facing up-hill, pushing and shoving with all his strength and a double leverage against the top of the inner side of the door slab. Narrow and unsupported, it tottered, toppled and fell forward on the leveled earth before the door of the tomb.

Putting the stone back would be a harder task which Mornington was not worrying about just then. Before the dust had settled, he was kneeling on the fallen slab and peering eagerly into the open tomb. Untouched by any plastering, the inner face of the walls and ceiling gleamed with the brightness of new-cloven gneiss, reflecting the light of the now overclouded sun behind him, so that Mornington could clearly see what was inside.

A bow with a severed string, a spear with a broken shaft, these manly tokens and their simple symbolism meant nothing to Mornington. Between the weapons lay the body itself, wrapped in many *lambas*, like a rude imitation of an Egyptian mummy. Beside these three things, the mummy, the bow and the spear, there was absolutely nothing in the tomb.

Where were the boasted treasures of Rafangoro? Was this the king's grave, after all? Yet what mere subject could have been buried with so much pomp and sacrifice?

"Come here, you heathen, and let's have a look at you," growled Mornington, as he grasped the mummy by the nearer end and dragged it toward the open. It was much harder to move than he had anticipated; strangely heavy, and, as it stirred, from somewhere within the wrappings came, muffled but unmistakable, the clink of metal.

"Blood and 'ouns! He's got it inside with him, under the covers!"

With greedy hands, he tore away the enshrouding *lambas*. They were of finest weave and texture, the outer wrappings of Indian cotton, the inner of native silk. The innermost one of all was blood red, the Antankara color of death. Ripping it rudely open at the top, Mornington started back with a gasp of horror.

He had never heard of the Malagasy custom of keeping a corpse for weeks between death and interment, tapping the drying body until it had withered to skin and bone. Instead of a dead man's placid face, he beheld a grinning death's head, hideously banded with curling black strips of human parchment.

The shock of finding Rafangoro already a skeleton gradually gave place to wonder that the dead king's bones should have seemed so heavy. The reason was not hard to guess. Seizing the torn edges of the crimson *lamba*, Mornington ripped it wide open from head to foot.

Hard was the couch of Rafangoro, but fit for a warrior king. His skeleton was not only imbedded in, but actually packed full of treasure beyond the computation of all his tribe. His spear points and arrow heads, his hunting knives, daggers, skin scrapers, unguent holders, and all the other innumerable articles of war and peace, were each and every one of precious metal, the most precious known to this chief of a stone age people—genuine, priceless iron.

His bony fingers rested on the greatest wonder of all: A rusty twelve-inch pot lid.

Maddened beyond all cursing or other human utterance, Lord Mornington threw back his head as he crouched there and howled a hideous, snarling, bestial howl of baffled greed. Snatching the iron pot lid out from under the dead man's hands, he furiously hurled the trumpery thing away. Straight into the tomb it flew, struck and rebounded from the rear wall, quivered and fell flat on the stone-slabbed floor with a ringing clang.

Resounding out of the empty tomb, both shout and clang were caught and thrown back by all the myriad echoes of that deep ravine and craggy mountainside. Louder and louder swelled the tumult, till the monkeys howled with fright and the parrots flew screaming far over the distant jungle. To the beating of Tartar war gongs and the hideous laughter of fiends, all Rafangoro's ancestors seemed to burst shrieking from their graves, to call down vengeance on the violator of the tomb.

Aghast at the black magic he had unwittingly wrought, Mornington crouched under the darkening sky and babbled oaths that were more like prayers.

"Oh, stop it! Stop it!" he groaned. "They'll hear it in the village—they'll come and find me here—they mustn't find things like this—I must put it all back—put it all back—put it all back——"

He was kneeling on the fallen door slab, frantically picking up scattered arrow heads and tatters of silk, when he saw, above the shadow of his own bent head, the shadow of a downward pointing spear.

Then a shadowy hand flew out and seized the descending shaft. The young King of the Antankara, the last of all the mourning host to leave and the first to hasten back to his father's grave, desired no swift or easy death for the vile despoiler of the dead.

## CHAPTER XVI

### A CRY IN THE NIGHT

"TAKE back your sword, Lieutenant, and bear it, as you have always borne it, with honor. Technically, you may have violated the strict letter of your parole by arranging for Lord Mornington's temporary escape; in effect, you have prevented a cowardly crime and saved the honor of Libertatia.

"Take back your sword, then—and for heaven's sake, take off that red coat! How you English can wear thick, flame-colored wool in the tropics, baffles my poor brain. Take the thing off, or at least unbutton it, sit down and let us be cool and civilized."

Fairfax, however, still remained tightly buttoned up and rigidly at attention, as he had first presented himself before Misson on that evening of the day when the Lord Conservator returned from his cruise among the islands. In full uniform, the subaltern had entered the library at the hour when he knew he would find his host alone there, saluted, unslung his scabbarded sword and placed it on the table, as if he were no longer on parole but under arrest, and formally stated the case against himself.

"Then, sir, you will send an expedition to bring back Lord Mornington from his present position among the Antankara?" he asked.

"But certainly," promised Misson. "We'll go together and try to put in a little pig sticking by the way. Though to tell you the truth, I would heartily prefer to leave that person where he is. Still, that would be an unkindness to my good friends the Antankara, for they are decent savages, while my lord is——"

"My superior officer, sir," hinted Fairfax gently.

"And therefore, not to be criticized in your presence," admitted Misson, with a thoroughly appreciative smile. "Therefore you stayed behind, when you could have gone with the Portuguese admiral on the last cartel ship, in order that you might safeguard your superior, as you had already defended him in court, even though privately you regard him as—all men of honor must. Ah, my Fairfax, you are the very soul of loyalty!"

"I—I—er, I see that you have picked up some new volumes in the Comoro Isles, sir," stammered the embarrassed Fairfax, his face as red as the coat he was unbuttoning. "I never knew that there was a bookseller in those parts."

"An itinerant one, as it were," answered Misson, lifting a splendidly bound folio from one of the many newly-opened packing cases that cumbered the library floor, and placing it tenderly on a hitherto empty shelf. "Knowing my few poor books as well as you do, and my habit of lending them to the even fewer readers who care to borrow, would it surprize you to learn that the last pamphlet which I loaned before sailing was the cause of Malachi Drury's late dereliction of duty?"

"Indeed? Did Drury borrow a book? Why, that old sea-dog can not read."

"But he can be read to. It seems that some one who had been in this room told him that I had this pamphlet about his beloved commander, Captain Kidd."

" 'The Compleate Vindication or a Parcel of High-placed Rogues Exposed'?" quoted Fairfax.

"Such was its title," nodded Misson. "I picked it up aboard the *Bijoux*, our first capture. Even the most worthless book is worth saving, in these savage solitudes, but I could not endure the wretched style in which this was written, the turgid bombast of some Grub Street pamphleteer. After a page or two, I threw the thing aside."

Fairfax grinned guiltily.

"*You* weren't a schoolboy in England, at the time of Captain Kidd's trial. I know whole pages of that forbidden pamphlet by heart. It was written for political reasons, alleging that Kidd had been sacrificed to save the reputations of Lord Bellomont, Lord Mornington, and others who had sent him out here with the King's commission to put down piracy, but with the real purpose of enriching his patrons by plundering the pirates' hoards.

"When I first saw the 'Compleate Vindication' on your book-shelves I prayed that it might stay there until after my lord was safely out of Libertatia. How much of its savage charges are truth and how much falsehood, I can not say, but I could easily picture its effect on the minds of your simple sea rovers. Doubtless Malachi Drury, when you held him to account this afternoon, quoted it for his own vindication?"

"With much rude eloquence," smiled Misson. "Nevertheless, I have convinced him that there is still law in Libertatia. But what a power there is in the printed page! We must have a small press of our own, for the laws and school books at least. I shall order one from Amsterdam."

"Through the—itinerant book seller?"

"Or some other agent of mine. See what a goodly invoice this one has brought me. Come, let us unpack them together."

Slowly and lovingly, with much turning of leaves and looking at title pages, they finished unpacking and shelving the three or four hundred newly-acquired books. There were works in French, English, Latin, Spanish and Portuguese. None were in Dutch, yet nearly all had been printed in Holland, then the publishing center of Europe.

Observing this fact, Fairfax visualized the thrifty skipper of some bluff-bowed Dutch East Indiaman, putting into Johanna for wood and water, and quietly setting a boatload of boxes ashore in exchange for good hard cash. Whoever the itinerant bookseller might be, his wares revealed the many-sidedness of Misson's active brain.

The "Insul Madagascar" of Hieronymus Megiserus, in the Altenburg edition of 1609; Etienne de Flacourt's "Histoire de la Grande Isle de Madagascar," Troyes, 1661; Vauban on the "Attack and Defense of Fortified Places," and his suppressed work on tax reform and the deplorable condition of the French peasantry; Mortimer's "Whole Art of Husbandry;" "Las Obras de Lope de Vega," the "Pharmaceuticae Rationalis," and Locke's "Conduct of the Understanding," were among the titles that Fairfax noted, together with works on ship building, surveying, mining, the manufacture of gunpowder, and several large volumes of architectural engravings.

Last of all was a huge packing case filled with newspapers, gazettes, reviews, news letters, reports of learned societies and other unbound periodicals. Starving for news, both men dropped all pretense of further unpacking and read as they stood, until Misson remarked that they might as well do it comfortably.

Clapping his dusty hands, he summoned four tall Johannese, who cleared away the empty boxes and wrapping paper, brought silver basins and embroidered towels for the gentlemen to wash their hands, snuffed the candle wicks, set out a small bowl of claret punch, and left the Lord Conservator and his guest very much at their ease.

Each in his leather armchair, alternately puffing his long churchwarden and sipping a tall, cool tumbler, the two settled down for the evening. Fairfax had a file of the London *Courant*, Misson the monthly *Relation des Nouvelles du Monde.*

In the soft candlelight, the ordered rows of books on the neat home made shelves looked as if they had stood there for years. On the tapestried wall above the book cases hung a large water-colored map of *La Grande Ville de Libertatia*, and somber canvases of haloed saints and cuirassed captains, painted in Portugal to adorn the stately cabin of some luckless Goa galleon. Except for the gauze mosquito nets stretched across the door and windows, the room might have been the library of some scholarly nobleman in Paris or London.

From outside came the hum of insects, the drowsy patter of the courtyard fountain, and that distant, intermittent crowing of wakeful game cocks and barking of sleepless curs that goes on all night long in almost any tropical town. About midnight, the usual faint yelping swelled suddenly into a high-pitched, furious chorus of all the dogs in Libertatia.

"Hallo, what's roused the hounds?" demanded Fairfax, starting up from the doze he had fallen into over his paper.

"The cry comes from the African quarter," observed Misson carelessly. "They should drown their puppies; their huts are swarming with starving curs. It is probably nothing but——"

A challenging shout, a woman's terrified scream, the report of a musket, cut through the frenzied barking. Then all other sounds were lost in the appalling yell of a hideous war-cry bursting from thousands on thousands of savage throats.

"*Mon Dieu!*" cried Misson, as he and Fairfax leaped to their feet. "We are attacked by the Antankara!"

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE SHRIVELING OF THE SCROLL

THAT the town was being attacked by savages was becoming more obvious every second, and the only tribe in touch with Libertatia was the Antankara. What could have turned them so suddenly from friends to foes was something that nobody had any time to speculate about, with that terrible war-cry ringing in his ears.

Misson opened a table drawer, pulled out a pair of pistols and handed them butt foremost to Fairfax, who looked to the priming, then thrust them into his sword belt. Savages know no neutrals or noncombatants. Buttoning up his coat, Fairfax signified with a lift of his eyebrows that he was waiting for orders.

"Go to the top of Tew's Tower, Mr. Fairfax, sound the alarm, then see if you can make out the strength of the enemy and the points of attack. As soon as you have found these out, report to me in the Grande Place."

Bursting out through the forgotten mosquito bar, Fairfax turned and raced along the colonnaded side of the courtyard. All the panic-stricken servants and hangers-on of this large semi-Oriental household were there already, screaming and wailing and racing about. He saw Aesa's splendid form towering above the riot, with two terrified girls clinging to her knees, like Niobe and her children. Then he dived into the black tunnel-like entrance and out through the unbarred gateway into the Grande Place.

Before him the trampled sand of the plaza glowed dully red, outside the long, curved shadow thrown by the dome of

Caraccioli's house. The dome itself stood out black against the bright blaze of burning thatch on the western edge of the town. Even in the brief time that it took Fairfax to sprint across the Grande Place, that blaze had noticeably increased.

Redder than the sand gleamed the reflected firelight on the tall stern windows of Tew's Tower, as Fairfax rounded the corner of the dark, deserted Parliament House. To his relief, at that moment the great bell began clanging the call to arms. As if the first stroke had been their signal to start, down the ship's gangway that formed the entrance to Tew's Tower came racing the buxom brown cook and four or five Indian maids. Running like frightened nymphs, they swerved round Fairfax and fled shrieking across the Grande Place, as if seeking refuge in Misson's house.

A poor choice of shelters, thought Fairfax, as he leaped up the long, steep gangway. Misson's palace was only a plastered basket, but Tew's Tower was built of solid ship's timber, stout enough to turn cannon-shot. Moreover, there were two long chase-guns behind the shuttered stern-ports under the quarter gallery, and four brass swivels topsides—light, showy little saluting guns, but securely mounted and capable of spitting small shot.

He noted these well-remembered pieces and considered the best places for posting musketeers at the cabin windows or the rail, while he was mounting the gangway to the truncated waist, then turned and scaled an endless series of steep little ladders to the quarter deck, poop, topgallant poop, and poop royal of the *Gunj Suwarie's* towering sternworks.

At last he stood, panting, on the topmost deck of all: A tiny, steep-pitched wedge of planking with a high gilt rail on either hand and astern a little teakwood door through which a man could walk into the huge stern lantern, to scour its leaded panes or trim the wicks. The lantern was now blazing bright, and at the bell which took up most of the narrow space before it, pulling the braided clapper lanyard with a steady hand, stood Lucy Tew.

"Well done, Lucy!" Fairfax commended her courage, as he edged past and close up under the lantern's dark inboard side.

There in its baking-hot shadow he could look down and see the whole field of action, not so much by the smoky light of the big, primitive oil-burner as by the lurid glare of the burning African quarter.

He could see the enemy very plainly. A shapeless, compact mass of Antankara warriors, at least four thousand strong, were pushing irresistibly forward and leaving nothing behind them but blazing wreckage and mangled dead. Here and there the crack of Brown Bess or the gleam of her bayonet told where some surviving Black Musketeer, caught without a chance to join his comrades, was manfully defending his home.

But the musket was soon emptied and the bayonet overmatched by a host of spears. Negroes who were lucky were stabbed to death where they fell fighting or were overtaken as they tried to flee. Those not so lucky were thrust at the spear point back into their burning homes, or lifted and thrown bodily into the nearest fire. Men, women, children, even the dogs and pigs, were being stabbed with javelins, trampled underfoot, ripped open, hoisted on flint tipped spears or burned alive by the frenzied Malagasy.

Fairfax had seen grim work in Flanders, but nothing to compare with this fiendish massacre. If the Antankara were treating their fellow-blacks so foully, then what would they do to the whites? And what were the whites doing to defend themselves.

By this time, practically every man who was sober enough to stagger had snatched up the handiest weapon and joined the scanty muster in the Grande Place. Looking down on them from Tew's Tower, and allowing for stragglers, Fairfax shook his head.

"Not two hundred and fifty, all told; ill-armed for the most part and worse disciplined. Hopeless!"

Facing about, he plucked the clapper-lanyard from Lucy's hand.

"Go downstairs, girl, snatch what jewels you can, then run for your life to the first boat leaving the shore."

"What, leave our lovely house? No, sir, I'll wait for Tom!"

"Were his frigate in harbor now, 'twould be too late to save tower or town. Look there!"

He pointed behind her to where new fires were springing up all along a great arc curving from the African quarter around the western and southern sides of the settlement, almost down to the lava dike on the beach.

"See how the savages have crept up and fired the outskirts! That grass and those palms are as dry as touchwood, and the land breeze sweeping the flames before it. Libertatia's doomed. Quick, down the ladder with you!"

But Lucy only set her chin more stubbornly and her feet more firmly. She had fallen into that mulish state of panic that utterly refuses to see or acknowledge the existence of any danger.

"Tom's a-coming," she repeated. "And when he comes, he'll find me here. *You* can go if you want to."

"You silly little idiot," snapped the exasperated Fairfax.

"Little!" She burst out laughing. "That from you!"

She topped him by three inches as she stood there in her bare feet. Laughing hysterically, with her head thrown back, her long dark-red hair loose to the wind and gleaming in the firelight, she looked like some flame-crowned demon-goddess, rejoicing over the burning city.

But to Fairfax she was simply an infernal nuisance and an awkward handful. One tap of his small, hard fist on the point of her beautiful chin would knock Lucy out, but it would also knock her head-first down the ladder to the deck below, and probably break her neck. He was strong enough to pick her up, sling her across his shoulder and carry her downstairs like a sack of corn, provided she had the sense to hang there, limp and quiet. Instead, she would be just the sort to cling frantically to every rail and stanchion within reach, regardless of everything but her blind obsession of waiting till Tom's return.

Something had to be done and done quickly. Looking down into the Grande Place again, Fairfax rejoiced.

"See, Lucy! They've gathered the women together and are starting them under escort down to the shore."

"What do I care? Let the rest go if they will. I be a-going to stay right here."

"Ah," said Fairfax, quietly. "The princesses are right."

"What's that?"

"Look down there! Do you see Aesa and Zarfa standing beside their husbands, shield on arm and simitar in hand? They boast that they are the only women who are brave enough to fight like men."

"They do, do they? The brown-skinned hussies! I'll show 'em!"

Lucy's white heels went flashing down the steep-pitched stairs. Fairfax, after a last look round, followed and found her taking a small packet strung on a thong out of a great iron-bound chest in the banquet-hall. Hanging the packet about her neck, she slammed down the lid of the chest, jumped up on it and began tugging at the fastenings of a trophy of arms on the wall.

Something shattered the painted glass in one of the western windows, flashed flaming across the banquet-hall, struck the topmost panel in the north-eastern corner and hung there, blazing.

"Lawks, what's that?" screamed Lucy.

"A fire-arrow. Gad, how that sandalwood panelling burns! Come quickly, girl."

"Just a minute."

Gritting his teeth, Fairfax started toward her, with no gentle intentions. Then the fastening yielded, a silver scabbard clattered to the floor, and Lucy stood brandishing a long, light rapier. She made so splendid a figure that Fairfax cried out in admiration—

"Bellona herself, egad!"

Leaping down from the treasure chest, she sprang past him with flying hair and draperies, out on deck and down the gangway, as if seeking her savage enemies, sword in hand.

"Gad, what a mine I've fired!" mused Fairfax, while he ran his fastest to keep up with her across the little park. "And this mad Amazon was once a lady's maid!"

FRAGRANT smoke clouds, sandalwood scented, blew over their heads; behind them, the stern-windows of Tew's Tower were no longer red with reflected firelight, but spouting great golden flames. Sparks and fragments of burning palm leaves from somewhere up-wind were dropping and smoldering all over the broad thatched roof of the Parliament House. Hardly had Lucy and Fairfax passed, when the whole dry mass blazed up with a roar, lighting the entire Grande Place as bright as day.

Looking pitifully few in that empty, firelit space, the armed forces of Libertatia were drawn up in hollow square. Fairfax's trained eye saw at a glance that there were sixteen files, three deep, on each face of the square. Including the four officers out in front, this amounted to one hundred and ninety-six present; the absent forty or fifty forming the escort to the women and children who by this time had disappeared down Victory Road.

The men were arrayed according to their weapons. The front rank—except for Ned Ling with his butcher's cleaver—was composed of swordsmen: Sailors with hangers or cutlases, Johannese and Indians bearing shield and tulwar. Between them, the pikemen in the second rank thrust out their lowered points. The third-rank men had either muskets or boarding pistols, which they were tentatively aiming across their comrades' shoulders.

Outside the square stood Misson, with Caraccioli, Voix de Foudre and Malachi Drury fuming beside him.

The ex-friar's face was white with pain, for he had risen from a sick bed to buckle his wooden leg to an inflamed stump, and every step cost him unspeakable agony. Together with Drury and Voix de Foudre he waved and shouted impatiently to Fairfax as he ran up. Misson, however, was calmly finishing, by the light of his burning city, the article he had been reading in the *Relation des Nouvelles du Monde*.

"Put Madame l'Admirale inside the square, with the other ladies, he commanded. "What have you to report, Lieutenant?"

Misson's indifference disappeared, however, as soon as he heard of what was going on in the African quarter.

"My brave musketeers!" he exclaimed with tears in his eyes. "Their poor little ones. We must rescue them."

Drawing his sword, Misson was on the point of ordering the square to advance, when Fairfax caught his arm.

"For your life, sir, hear me out! Besides the four thousand tribesmen on our front, and the incendiaries firing the windward side of the town, I caught the pale flicker of flint spear heads above a dark mass moving out of the mangroves down by the lava dike."

"A second body of Antankara? Of what strength?"

"Not less than a thousand warriors, advancing northward along the beach," declared Fairfax.

"*Mon Dieu!* They may well reach the wharf and the boats ahead of the refugees!"

"Exactly, sir. We must fall back at once, or be cut off."

Misson frowned and shook his head. His trained military mind, like Fairfax's, realized the necessity of retreat, but his generous heart revolted at the thought of abandoning his black fellow-citizens.

"As to that, Mr. Fairfax, I will take the responsibility," he answered. "You will take command of the small-arms men and keep them from wasting their powder. We have barely twenty rounds. The men I sent to fetch more from the dockyard arsenal have not yet returned, but we can wait no longer."

Reluctantly, for he would have greatly preferred fighting sword in hand somewhere in the front rank, Fairfax took up his post inside the square. Before he had finished inspecting his musketeers' priming, and while Misson was still striving, in agony of mind, to decide whether to advance or retreat, the enemy were upon them.

The flimsy white wattle-and-daub garden wall that ran from the corner of Caraccioli's house to the corner of Misson's, suddenly bulged outward, split, burst into shreds and was utterly swept away by the dark human torrent that surged into the Grande Place like a sea through a broken dike.

"Save us, save us, *Gran' Capitaine!*" wailed some of the foremost, holding out their arms appealingly as they ran up. "Save us or we die!"

"Hold your fire!" commanded Misson. "It is our brethren—we must not shoot them down!"

Horror and pity filled the rough hearts of his two hundred; horror and pity mixed with bewilderment and fear. In the glaring firelight, they could plainly see that the leaders of the great throng rushing toward them, the ones in front who, denied all other avenues of escape, had battered down the wall with their own bare breasts, were black Libertatian fugitives.

To level a musket and smack a bullet into those beseeching faces was too horrible. Yet, roaring along behind them, hard on the fugitives' flying heels, charged the victorious Antankara. If that mingled mass of pursuers and pursued were allowed to sweep on unchecked, it would not only break the square but stamp it as flat as the trampled fragments of Caraccioli's fence.

But the Antankara, knowing little about

firearms and less about self-restraint, failed to leave well enough alone. Born javelin throwers, they could not resist such tempting, short range targets as the bare backs of the refugees. Hardly had the poor wretches left the dark of the garden for the glare of the burning Parliament House, before the long, light casting-spears came flying after them as they fled. Negro after negro dropped with a four-foot shaft quivering between his shoulder blades. Man after man, woman after woman, fell until there was none left to fall.

OVER them crashed the avenging volley of Fairfax's musketeers. Checked by this and by their own pausing to cast their javelins, the Antankara lost so much momentum that with all the weight of their charge they failed to break the square. But they crumpled and drove it staggering back, hemmed it about and bore it along like a reeling raft on a broad black torrent roaring down to the sea.

In that nightmare fight, Fairfax's brain seemed to split in half; one part very capably commanding the musketeers, the other picking up and retaining stray impressions. The last thing that he noticed in the Grande Place, as the hollow square fought its way out of the swarming plaza into Victory Road, was a long, slender smoke jet spouting out of a crack in the dome on Caraccioli's house. He had often wondered what the underside of that mysterious dome looked like, but now he would never know.

Beyond that, he remembered nothing whatever, until he was annoyed by the expression of placid calm on the face of the *Winchelsea's* figurehead, looking down like a bored Olympian on the struggling mortals beneath her feet. The battlements on her mural crown made him fervidly wish that there had been some sort of a city wall around Libertatia. What utter idiocy, to fortify the harbor mouth, yet leave the landward side unwalled and open to a thousand miles of savagery!

Fairfax had an ironic vision of that pretty water-colored plan of *La Grande Ville de Libertatia*, that he had been looking at in Misson's library, less than an hour ago. Now the city itself was shriveling like a burning scroll.

Driven by the rising off-shore wind, the fire had swept diagonally through the palm grove to Victory Road, leaped across and was now driving on through the French quarter toward the dockyard. On both sides of the broad avenue, from the Grande Place eastward to Pickle Tub Lane, the bamboo fences and drought-parched gardens, the little thatched cottages that the married men had built for their captured brides, and the tall screw palms that had shaded them so cozily, were all ablaze.

Victory Road was broad enough for those in the middle of the burning street to endure the heat, but nearer the houses it was too hot for any human, particularly a naked savage, to stand the scorching. The flank attacks on the hollow square literally melted away.

Deprived of their support, the main body of the Antankara ceased pressing the rearguard, and began to hold off and throw javelins. Instantly, Misson countercharged at the head of a wedge of pikemen, sweeping the road clear and hurling the enemy back into the Grande Place. At the same time, and by his orders, Drury and Voix de Foudre led a cutlas charge on the few hundred Malagasy who had slipped round to the leading face of the square, cut many of them to pieces, and drove the rest howling and scampering down toward the waterfront.

Then Misson's pikemen fell back, supported in their retreat by Fairfax's musketeers, who had reloaded their pieces and replenished their ammunition from the pockets and pouches of the dead and wounded. When all had run the gantlet of the fire and reassembled beyond the last burning house—Ling's butcher shop at the corner of Pickle Tub Lane—there were only a hundred and eighteen of them left alive and fit to fight.

But they raised a cheer at the sight of two of the Brethren long since given up for dead. Out of the garden of Fiddler's Green, which the fire had surrounded but spared, after the freakish habit of fires, walked Sheer Hulk, his face as judicious and unperturbed as ever, and Fingers, with both hands clutching a huge, rusty horse-pistol.

The two were just in time to take their places inside the reformed square, before it took up its troubled march to the sea. Beyond Fiddler's Green, they crossed the wake of the fire: Charred palm stumps and wide beds of winking, dying coals, where the flimsy little houses had flared and gone.

Only the figureheads that had been

erected as trophies were still wrapped in many-colored driftwood flames and flickering shadows that made the carven faces seem to writhe in pain and look, as an English seaman muttered, "like blessed martyrs a-burnin' at the stake."

Thankfully they passed the last of these gruesome torches, as they reached the end of the road and came to the shore. Here it seemed so dark to their fire-dazzled eyes, still smarting from smoke and sweat, that for the moment they could only dimly discern the white beach and the long wharf beyond. Moored alongside the wharf lay the captured Portuguese flagship, the *Goa Dourada*. Lights glowed hospitably through her cabin windows, torches were burning and people hurrying about her deck.

Then the lighted windows cracked with the heat of the flames within, and the torches were touched to the tarry shrouds, and the people on deck were shown to be Antankara warriors. Howling with triumph, they leaped down from the *Goa Dourada's* lofty rail to the warf, where they danced and capered and brandished their reddened spears in savage glee, by the light of the mounting flames.

"The dirty *saltambanques*" growled Voix du Foudre. "Let's put out the fire with their blood and save that good ship, my captain."

"She had not a sail bent," objected Misson, pointing to the bare yardarms. "Moreover, the flood is making. Before we could bend enough canvas to move her against this tide, the whole tribe would be at our throats. Down to the boats, my children, and shove off."

FROM the wharf to the dockyard, the whole beach was lined with small boats and canoes, drawn up beyond high-water mark. A sailor took hold of the nearest one to run it down to the water, then straightened up a bitter cry.

"Stove in!"

"Burned!" echoed his mate, who had gone to the dugout alongside. "And this 'un's bilged!"

"Not a boat that can swim, my captain," reported Voix de Foudre. "The black pigs have burned or scuppered them all!"

"To the dockyard, then."

But the dockyard, together with the *Résolution* carreened at the sheer hulk, had already been set on fire, either by the general conflagration or by some of the plundering Antankara. Now, warned by the yells of those on the pier that the white men were trying to escape by water, hundreds of eager warriors came rushing out through the guardhouse gate. In from the wharf, up from the southern end of the beach, and down out of Victory Road swarmed the triumphant Malagasy, penning their foes between the sea and a crescent of thirsty spears.

Stuck on the longest lance and born before them in savage triumph, grinned the ghastly severed head of Lord Mornington.

As for the refugees who had fled from the city, only to find themselves cut off from their friends and trapped by the destruction of the boats, it was now made fearfully evident what had befallen them. From the blazing *Goa Dourada* came the sickening odor of burning human flesh, to proclaim that the refugees had been overwhelmed and massacred on board the unmunitioned flagship, now their floating funeral pyre.

Silently, grimly, the little hollow square formed up for the last stand. They had no hope but to die fighting, when a bright light flared by the harbor mouth and the cry went up: "A sail!"

But cruelly soon they saw that it was only a fire in Fort République. Then another blaze broke out in Fort Indépendance, both fires finding plenty of fuel in the thatched barracks and wooden platforms within the earthworks. What had befallen the score or so of men in garrison, too few to defend a single wall of either fortress against a storming-party, seemed no hard riddle to guess.

"It is the end," said Misson.

Even as he said so, he noticed, silhouetted against the glare of the burning forts, the masts and topsail-yards of the two big sloops, rising at anchor half a mile off-shore, with never a soul aboard.

"Volunteers!" he shouted. "A dozen good swimmers, to bring in the *Enfance* or the *Liberté!*"

Six Bermudans and four Johannese threw down their weapons, stripped as they splashed through the shallows, breasted the water and swam like mermen, for perhaps a hundred strokes. Then out from the dockyard darted a captured longboat, paddled by Antankara fishermen who had a most delightful time stabbing the swimmers with fish-spears or heading them back to shore.

Those that lived to reach it, naked and weaponless, fell into the hands of the warriors now swarming and pressing on every side of the dwindling hollow square.

Dwindling but still unbroken the square remained, as long as the musketeers could blow the heart out of every enemy rush with a ringing volley, then bite and ram home another cartridge behind the sheltering hedge of pikes and blades. But all too soon, they had fired their last round.

Throwing away his useless pistols, Fairfax shouted an old command of the days before the bayonet.

"Club muskets and fall on!"

He had never before given that command while standing inside so small a hollow square, or he would have ducked his head. Steel-shod gun-butts flailed round him on every side. One caught the lieutenant shrewdly on the back of his skull and dropped him senseless.

When Fairfax opened his eyes again, he was lying on his left elbow, staring at a four-foot breach on the opposite side of the square, through which gap an Antankara warrior was rushing in at him with levelled spear. Intent on stabbing the fallen officer, the savage paid no heed to the two tall women who were closing in on him from either side. Aesa's round brass shield turned aside his spear-point; Zarfa's simitar came down with all her strength on the nape of his neck, killing him instantly.

"Well struck, sister! The next to me!"

Like a tigress, Aesa leaped on a paunchy warrior who was prancing triumphantly in through the breach, slashed him and drove him bellowing back. Zarfa sprang through on her sister's heels, as the seamen on either side edged in together and closed the square again—with an Antankara warrior shut inside!

Half dazed and wholly engrossed in these valiant exploits of the fighting princesses, Fairfax had failed to notice the duel between this spearman and Lucy. Unlike the island Amazons, the English girl had no pretty little round shield, like an enameled saucepan lid, strapped to her left forearm, but she had seized her opponent's slender spear-shaft just below the head with her left hand. His red-gashed palm and dripping fingers showed what had happened to his own right hand, when he tried to play the same trick with her keen-edged rapier.

Lucy had freed her blade and wildly thrusting and slashing at the spearman, making him leap and writhe in every direction to save his skin. Neither one could loose the other's grip on the spear, and neither dared let go. Thus linked together, with her weapon off-setting his greater strength, the lanky black savage and the tall white girl wrenched and wrestled and whirled about in a mad death dance on the reddened sand.

Following them about, like a referee, lurched Sheer Hulk the armless man, his face distorted with agony at his impotence to strike a blow. Fingers, crouching on the sand, wept and swore while he tugged at the rusty hammer of his horse-pistol, that had missed fire and was too stiff for his weak hands to recock.

All this Fairfax saw in a flash, as his consciousness returned. Still dizzy from the blow that had stunned him, he groped for his fallen sword, found it and staggered to his feet. Rising, he saw Sheer Hulk stand on one leg, thrust out and plant a buckled shoe behind the black's bare heel.

The warrior tripped and fell flat on his back, pulling Lucy down on top of him. Intent on pushing the flint spear head away from herself, she never realized that she had planted the rapier-point on the broad of her enemy's chest, until the weight of her falling body drove the slim blade through him to the hilt.

Then, she fainted.

"COWARDS! Cowards! Close in and fight like men!"

But the Antankara had had their fill of close fighting for the nonce. Their king and his choicest warriors lay dead or dying around that stubborn little group of valiant fighters—the last of the Libertatians.

The hollow square had long since dwindled to a shapeless clump of weary men surrounding the senseless body of Lucy Tew. How long she had lain there on top of the man she had killed, how long he himself had stood and fought sword to spear, were matters about which Fairfax wondered vaguely. His sword arm ached with fatigue. Looking at it, he saw that it had been stripped utterly bare of coat- or shirt-sleeve, and was dyed from fingers to elbow as red as his dripping blade.

How this had happened, he could not in the least remember. He recalled how he had seen old Malachi Drury being speared to death, and when he had heard the dying shout of Voix de Foudre. Looking about him, Fairfax saw that Misson and Caraccioli were still on their feet, with some five-and-twenty more. Before them lay heaped a ring of slain; beyond that, at a respectful distance, stood the living ring of Antankara.

Clashing their simitars on their shields, Aesa and Zarfa scorned and mocked their foes.

"Cowards! Cowards! Send us your women if you have no men!"

Swift and sharp came the answer. Zarfa the beautiful fell at her husband's feet, like the warrior queen she was, shield on arm, sword in hand, and an arrow piercing her fearless heart.

Yelling exultantly, the Antankara bent their bows or poised their javelins, to strike down their foes from afar with a cloud of missiles. Their eyes were picking their targets, their fingers drawing the bow string or balancing the slender throwing spear, when their ears were deafened with thunder, and the bodies of those to seaward were ripped and riddled with grape shot.

Sweeping the beach with their swivel guns, the *Enfance* and the *Liberté* were standing close inshore, working in on the last of the flood and against the off shore breeze. Each sloop, as she drew up abreast the scene of action, backed her big square topsail and cast off the gig and the longboat towing astern. Shipping their oars, the four boats' crews came racing in to the rescue, while the gunners aboard the sloops kept plying the swivels to cover the embarkation.

They found Misson and his men out in breast-deep water, holding their wounded shoulder-high. Fairfax was carrying Lucy, who was still unconscious but clutching the rapier hilt with a grip that had made him choose to break off the blade when he raised her, rather than try to withdraw it or unclasp her rigid fingers.

He laid her down on the bow-grating of *Liberté's* longboat, scrambled aboard himself, and took off what was left of his old red coat, to lay over her silken shreds. But before he could spread it over her, two mighty arms reached inboard, and laid Zarfa beside Lucy. Crippled and burdened with his dead, Caraccioli had staggered out to this, the last boat, only to find it already loaded down to the water's edge.

"Heave that dead woman overboard!" rasped the hard voice of the man from Old Calabar.

The ex-blackbirder had a good opinion of himself that night, and not without justification. Left in command of both forts, with too few men to hold either post against the black hordes that were swimming the strait and swarming over the walls like driver ants, he had fired the fortresses and embarked their garrisons without a casualty, in a couple of rotten dugouts that had somehow floated long enough to carry them to the anchored sloops.

"Heave over that female corpse with the arrow through it, if you're wishful to come aboard," decreed the man from Old Calabar. "There's no room for the both of you, Caraccioli. Her weight and yours together would sink us."

Crammed with refugees, the longboat was already loaded to danger-point. Her gunwale was so low that Caraccioli, standing shoulder-deep before the stem-post, could look inboard. Calmly and deliberately he considered the situation, until suddenly every one in the boat began shouting to him to look behind him.

Turning his head, Caraccioli saw a host of pursuing warriors already wading out through the shallows, with their javelins poised for casting. Looking away from them and into the anxious faces of his brethren in the longboat, he smiled as if he had found the solution of all his problems.

"Bury my wife with honor," he directed. "Count me as one already dead. The wound poison is creeping up into my body and no lancet can cure me but the spear. Even without my beloved's little weight, my bulk would surely swamp you. May you go with God, my children."

"Hold on, sir," protested Fairfax, kicking off his shoes, "I can swim and——"

He was raising one foot to plant it on the gunwale and so spring overboard, when Caraccioli forestalled him. Placing both hands against the stem-post, with all his burly strength the ex-friar thrust the longboat out into the bay.

Thrown off his balance, Fairfax fell back into the bottom of the boat. By the time he regained his footing, the rowers had dipped their oars and were pulling her head round. Looking shoreward, he had an unforgettable vision of Caraccioli, standing there in the sea, the javelins raining about him, and his arms up-raised in a parting benediction.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE NEW LIBERTATIA

"TO ST. MARY'S," commanded Misson, as soon as all the survivors were safe aboard the two sloops. "There we should find Tew, in the *Victoire*. Then, we will return."

With many a backward look at their burning city and many a vengeful vow, they put out on the first of the ebb, passed between the smoldering ruins of the forts, and down the outer bay, till they came at sunrise to open sea. There, while Misson faltered through the simple service which her husband had composed, they committed the body of Zarfa to the deep.

They put into Antsirane to refill their water casks, and had the luck to shoot a wild hump-backed cow they found drinking at the spring. Her meat and the remnants of the stores left over from the Comoro Islands cruise sufficed them for the three hundred mile run southward to St. Mary's Isle.

The wind held fair, and they made their landfall early on the third day. By mid-afternoon they were within the notorious pirate haven. A Malabar grab was standing out to sea, two dhows and a pink were riding at anchor, but there was no sign of the *Victoire*. Anxious for information, Mission hastened ashore. The first man he met on the beach was Tew.

"Ah, you are here, my admiral!" he exclaimed with relief. "But where is the frigate?"

"She—she's gone," Tew faltered.

"Gone, without you? But where? Tell me, what has happened?"

"I'll tell you as best I may," said Tew hoarsely. "Nor will it take many words. This day fortnight, I came ashore to dine with the Governor of St. Mary's. While we were at table, drinking a bowl of punch, on a sudden a violent storm arose. I ran down to the shore and made a signal for a boat to carry me off, but the sea was already running so high that they durst not venture out of the ship. The storm all the while increased until, after less than two hours, the *Victoire* parted her cables and was driven ashore against those iron cliffs. Before my eyes, she perished with all her men."

Misson broke down and wept like a little child. After witnessing the martyrdom of Caraccioli and the destruction of Libertatia, this was too much for him to endure. A sailor's first ship is his first love, and the *Victoire* was the first and only ship in which Misson had ever sailed. He had been a raw young landsman when he had joined her at Marseilles. Aboard her, he had learned the ways of the sea, dreamed of a free commonwealth of seamen, and heard himself proclaimed its ruler on her quarter deck.

To Misson, the *Victoire* was more than the swiftest and most powerful frigate of the fleet, more than his first command, more than the mere accidental birthplace of the Brotherhood and the Republic—she was the very soul of Libertatia. And now, she was gone.

Something seemed to break and die in Misson's heart. His face, still wet with childish tears, became old and sorrowful. That look and his silence together were more than Tom Tew could bear.

"Here, take it back," he blurted, pulling out his emblem of office and trying to press it into Misson's hand. "If I'd stayed aboard, I might ha' saved her. Take the chain and whistle, for I'm no longer Lord High Admiral of Libertatia."

"Keep the bauble, for there is no longer any Libertatia."

Unheeded, the golden whistle and diamond chain slipped flashing to the sand, while Tew stood staring into Misson's eyes.

"What's happened to Libertatia?"

"Stormed, sacked and burned by the Antankara," answered Misson. "They came down on us, three nights since, five or six thousand strong. Caraccioli is dead, and ——"

"Lucy! Is she——"

"She's safe on board the *Liberté*. Fairfax saved her life at peril of his own."

"Let's aboard, then," cried Tew, impatiently. "Come, tell me the rest of it as we go."

Grasping Misson's arm, he was striding off, when some one behind them hiccoughed politely: "Ha-hav'n' you forgoz'n somethin'?"

Rocking gently back and forth on his bare, bandy legs, that were planted far apart to support the weight of his ponderous belly, swayed a bleary-eyed, fatuously smiling human rum-puncheon. He wore a handsome three-cornered hat clapped on the back of his bald head, a fine ruffled shirt dappled with wine and food-stains, blue velvet knee breeches, and neither shoes nor stockings.

With a shaking, black-nailed forefinger, he pointed at the Lord High Admiral's golden whistle and diamond chain lying forgotten on the sand.

"Adm'al Tew," he proclaimed portentously, "it ish my 'ficial duty, as Gov'nor of Sain' Mary's, to 'form you 'ficially that if I'd ever 'spected you of havin' thozhe sparklers on you, I'd ha' cutcher —— throat any night thezhe two weeks. And any o' my people'd do the same. But jush now, I'm feelin' benev'lently 'sposed to poor shipwrecked shailor. As one good feller to nozzer good feller, I warn you 'ficially, take your diamon's and your shloops and shail away. Lemme see diamon's."

Attempting to pick them up, the Governor of St. Mary's overbalanced himself, fell flat on his face in the soft, warm sand, and after a few preliminary grunts went sound asleep.

"The sodden oaf has spoken the truth for once," said Tew, stuffing the chain into his pocket and gratefully covering the sleeper's bald head with his fallen tricorn to save him from a sunstroke. "They'd knife a man thrice over for the least of these stones, in this lecherous hole. Let's buy what stores we can—before this beast can change his mind—and sail away."

"Aye, sail away," sighed Misson. "But whither, whither?"

His active brain, however, had struck out a plan of action before the boat's crew had rowed them out to the *Liberté*.

"We'll round the Cape and make for the Guinea coast. Van Ghent is there, cruising in the *Bijoux*. With her for a nucleus, we'll soon form another fleet, put back to Madagascar and rebuild our city. We should find much melted gold and silver in the ashes.

"To guard against another night surprize, we'll build the new town on a more compact plan, surrounded by a moat and stockaded earthworks; a bastioned trace, with block houses at the gates and salients. Have you a bit of paper about you?"

* * *

BEFORE sundown, Misson had mapped out the streets and city walls of the New Libertatia. Within a week, both sloops had been provisioned and made ready for the run to the Guinea coast. With characteristic generosity, Misson gave Tew command of the *Enfance*, hoisting his own flag on the *Liberté*, whose mast had been badly sprung off the Comoro Islands.

She was to have been docked at Libertatia, but there were no proper facilities at St. Mary's. Moreover, the crowd ashore were becoming more sullen and hostile every day; some of them openly boasting that they would capture and gut both sloops, as soon as any of their own pirate ships came in. So Misson decided to put forth without further delay.

Accordingly, he mustered all hands on the after-deck of the *Liberté*, announced his decision, and bade them choose under which commander they would sail. Forty-five men, all told, had escaped with him from Libertatia. Fifteen of these were French, the last of the *Victoire's* original crew, who remained with their old commander. The rest, as it chanced, were all English and chose to go in the *Enfance*, under Tew.

Fairfax reluctantly decided to go with his countrymen. He and Misson had become the closest and most congenial of friends, between whom, moreover, existed an intellectual companionship that he would sorely miss when he was with the Tews. If only Aesa could have been kept in strict Oriental seclusion, as she had been on land! Expanding her primitive personality all over the *Liberté's* narrow cabin, she had made life lively and miserable for both men during the past ten days. Tacitly, Fairfax and Misson realized that the time had come when they must part.

But before the two crews separated came the distribution of the treasure. Bar after bar of gold was brought up from the lazaret; Misson's own wealth, which he had intended to exchange at Johanna for other European commodities that he had ordered sent out together with the books from Holland, but had somehow failed to receive. This bullion was cut up, and weighed out in equal shares, of which one was voted, by acclamation, to Fairfax.

Then Tew threw into the common stock his admiral's chain and Lucy's jeweled rapier hilt. But the crowd cried out against accepting trophies so bravely won, and bade him and Lucy pick them up again.

"Now to my manner of thinking," protested Tew, "this whistle and chain be public property, and what Mistress Tew saved from our house that night be our very own. But since you say so, lads, we'll turn it t'other way about, and no man the loser. Sweetling, pass over what you've got hid in your bosom."

It was the packet which Fairfax had seen Lucy take from the chest in Tew's Tower: a doeskin sack strung on a thong. Ripping it open with the point of his knife, Tew poured out on the deck a couple of hundred little gray pebbles.

"Rough diamonds, to go with Misson's gold!"

Being much of a size, the diamonds were counted out as they came—four apiece and an odd one over, to be diced for by the wounded. Cheers were given for Misson and Tew, health drunk, and hands clasped hard, as the English went over the *Liberté's* side to go aboard the *Enfance*. Putting out from St. Mary's, they sailed southward together, on the quest for New Libertatia.

But before they had lost sight of Madagascar, Tew's men began to ask each other troublesome questions. What if they failed to find Van Ghent and the *Bijoux* off the Guinea coast? What if they found the Queen's fleet there instead? Wasn't a squadron coming out this year and due by now?

Weren't they all Britishers aboard the *Enfance*? Were thirty-two stout Englishmen to be forced into fighting their own fellow-countrymen by half their number of French? Why not let Misson carry on with his rainbow chase, while they took their own pot of gold and diamonds to New York, where every retired rover was esteemed an honest gentleman who had prospered in the Red Sea trade? Or, since New York was a wicked, extravagant town where a man's money lasted no time at all, why not go to New England, where gold was so scarce and paper money ranked plentiful since the war, that what they had would make them all rich?

Why not go to New England? Whispered at first in the fo'csle this proposition soon was being argued openly on deck and discussed at the cabin table. Lucy, war weary and homesick, dreamed of settling down in peaceful Providence or tiny, primitive Newport, whose rural charms were dwelt on at great length by the hard-bitten Rhode Island mate—the man from Old Calabar. Tew figured that the three least links of his admiral's chain would pay for the lost Bermudan sloop eleven times over, and so win him a pardon from the Governor of Bermuda and the other stockholders of the Royal African Company.

Fairfax alone had nothing to say on the subject, for his lips were still sealed by his parole. Privately, however, he rather relished the possibility of going to North America. He had seen enough of the tropics to last him a lifetime. Now that Lord Mornington was dead, Fairfax felt free to send the Honorable East India Company a final report and his resignation.

After that, he might drop down into Virginia, to visit his kinsfolk there, who were always talking about organizing an expedition into the unknown land west of the Blue Ridge. Perhaps, with his Madagascar gold and four little diamonds, they might actually cross the range.

But after all, wouldn't it be a scurvy trick to accept Misson's gold and then desert him? Fairfax felt so and, as the days passed, he realized that Tew and the others felt the same way. Captain and crew had long since loudly agreed that there was nothing whatever to prevent their parting company from the *Liberté* and setting a course of their own; yet somehow, like Fairfax's kinsmen, they never could make a start.

An intangible grapnel held the two sloops together: The unbreakable loyalty that Misson's generous soul planted in others' breasts. He inspired trust as prodigally as he bestowed it. Unlike other outlaw chiefs, he ruled by faith and not by fear. Gentle, quixotic, chivalrous, unspoiled by fortune, undismayed by fate, an instinctive aristocrat but a humble friend and lover of all mankind, Misson was a man born out of his age. He was the Bayard of piracy.

* * *

OFF Cape Infantes, the fair following wind began to stiffen to a gale. Squall after squall, each blacker and fiercer than the last, drove the two sloops scudding before it through a rapidly rising sea. On board the *Enfance*, the topsail-yard was sent down and well-secured on on deck, mainsail close-reefed and storm-trysail set.

Lowering clouds and driving rain darkened the air, frequently hiding their consort from their sight. Once through the flying scud and the dense gray downpour, Fairfax saw the *Liberté* close abeam. Misson himself was at the helm, holding her steady on the long, long course to the New Libertatia.

Then a black squall hid her from their eyes. Out of the darkness came the crack of a breaking spar and a sudden hail:

"*A nous, l'Enfance! A*——"

And then, no more.

"Her mast was sprung," thought Fairfax, as he listened and waited in helpless agony. "Lord grant it hasn't carried away! Lord, send us light ——"

His prayer was answered by a gigantic flash of lightning. A musket-shot off the starboard quarter lay the wreck of the *Liberté*. Her mast had gone by the board, her deck was swept utterly bare, and over her taffrail curved the crest of a mighty wave. It broke, as the darkness fell and the thunder pealed out her *requiem*.

Trailing her lee guns under, straining and all but swamped, the *Enfance* came about and beat back into the teeth of the storm. Back and forth she tacked for hours, searching and seeking, but never finding a trace of Misson and his men.

"I think," said Fairfax softly, "that they have already found their city."

"Aye, they're all with Caraccioli now, in the New Libertatia," agreed Tom Tew. "Some day, we'll make that landfall, and talk over old times at Fiddler's Green. But now, we'll set our course for New England.

"Ready about! Stand by!"

# VIGILANTE JUSTICE

### by J. R. Johnston

THE Montana Vigilantes, who delivered that Territory of such notorious gangs as Henry Plummer's in the '60's, were nothing if not methodical in their self-appointed task. Besides Plummer's band of road agents and murderers, to which a total of one hundred and two deaths alone is credited, the population of the gold fields numbered many fugitives from justice from all parts of the country.

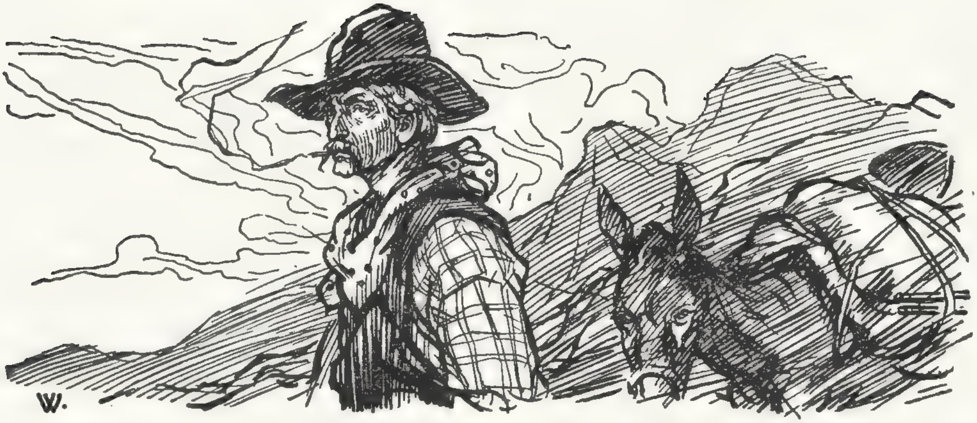
In many places the lawless element was totally superior in force to the honest citizen group, which was driven to the establishment of a Vigilance Committee to protect lives and property. Outnumbered as they were, the Vigilantes worked in secret and as mysteriously as possible, their principal tools were the mask and the rope. Some time during the night a white card, always exactly seven by nine inches and bearing the numerals 3-7-77 in black ink, was pinned on the tent or tacked on the door of the desperado who had been sentenced to banishment at a secret meeeting of the Vigilance Committee.

The man who received such a notice knew whence it came and that it meant, "Pack up and leave within twenty-four hours or swing on the second night." If he had the least glimmering of sense he also knew the warning was no bluff.

The Vigilantes held no public trials but if sometimes a mistake was made and the victim appealed for a review of the facts through certain channels, he was certain of a second hearing. In such a case a midnight tribunal was held which reconsidered and sometimes reversed the sentence. More often it reaffirmed the banishment with a second placard, against which there was no appeal. If the warning was disregarded, the lawless one found himself the center of a very interested and determined crowd on the second night and he did not live to see the next sunrise.

The Vigilantes constituted themselves judges, jury and executioners all in one, and their trials were certainly short. Whenever a highwayman or murderer was caught, the leader of the Vigilante band would say:

"All in favor of hanging this man step to the right of the road; those who are for letting him go step to the left!"



# THE QUEST OF THE E PLURIBUS

### by Harvey J. Case

JIM HARMSEN uncoiled his lanky length from the depths of his barrel chair and leaned forward sufficiently to obtain a comprehensive view of the little cavalcade approaching.

Down the dusty alkali street that bisected the timeworn camp of Midas it came. In the lead pattered a little mouse-colored burro, high-packed, eyes half closed and ears flopping dejectedly at every step. The man behind him swung along jauntily enough, if the word might be used to express the intent rather than the result. "Dad" Quade was getting along in years and each succeeding one had taken it's toll of his one time vigor. Rheumatism had bothered him lately more than he cared to admit, but before the attendant spectators he straightened his old back gallantly, cocked his hat at a jaunty angle over one eye, and whacking the protesting animal before him into a slightly faster pace, made his annual leave-taking of the camp in as fluent a manner as possible.

"That old codger is a-goin' to start on one prospecting trip too many one of these days, an' he ain't a' comin' back," commented Harmsen pessimistically to his companion beside him.

"Traveling purty light, ain't he?"

"Yeah, I guess maybe Joel's habit of grub-staking him with nuthin' to show fer it the past fifteen years has begun to wear thin in spots. A shame too, but the old boy seems to have lost his luck the same time he lost his partner."

The traveling pair came abreast and the old man swung up his hand in a parting greeting to the two on the store porch.

"So long, boys," he called. "I'll see you in a couple of months, maybe sooner, if we git this stake of ours nailed down afore then."

"Good luck, Dad," Jim Harmsen returned in kind. "Better keep a tight rein on Raggety Anne. She looks purty skittish this morning," he added in broad sarcasm.

Dad Quade fetched a rousing thump on the bobbing grayrump of "Raggety Ann" before him and passed out of sight around the turn in the road, the powdery dust puffing up at each step in an eddying grey canopy behind him.

Harmsen settled back in his chair, his gaze dwelling ruminatively far out in the blue haze of the distant Cabobai Range, and addressed his companion beside him.

"'Shorty,'" he said, "there goes one o' a breed of men you won't find any of the like anywheres. Sort of mavericks I guess, growin' that way from herding by themselves so long, maybe."

Shorty Vance spat shortly in the general direction of the road.

"All of them prospectors are crazy coots and, from what I hear, Quade is worse cracked than most. Made his pile and lost it a couple of times already, didn't he?"

"Dad's all right, and a good man in his day." Harmsen spoke defensively. "He and his partner located the Golden Girl and a couple of other purty good 'uns, but they was prospectors, not financiers, and they let themselves be froze out."

"What happened to his partner? Quit him or somethin'?"

"Quit him? Them two?" snorted Harmsen. "You couldn't have separated them with a club. Old 'Dutch' was named right, a regular squarehead. He was purty green when he hit the diggins, but Quade took him in hand and eddicated him and made a fair-to-middlin' hard rock man out of him too."

"Sort of a Damond and Pithicus combination, as you might say." Shorty Vance threw this bit of gleanings from his classics into the conversational ring with an elegant air of carelessness.

"Yeah, maybe so," returned Harmsen unimpressed. "Anyway as you might call it, they stuck together like brothers. Used to work long enough till they got a stake and then they was off punchin' a couple of jacks over the hills, a'pickin' at whatever showings they could find.

"They made a couple of small strikes and lost them," continued Harmsen. "However they was purty lucky and they opened up the Golden Girl—a bonanza and a big one. Lost that in a sky's-the-limit poker session one night and that ended their luck."

"Just let me git a tail holt on anything like that and you wouldn't see me flirtin' with no pasteboards. No, sir; what I git I hang on to." Shorty Vance held very positive ideas as to his own tenacious qualities.

Harmsen settled back more comfortably in the cavernous depths of his chair. He picked up the threads of the narrative of the two old-timers once more.

"Anyway, Quade's partner up and died on him one day. Tried to cure bad smallpox with worse likker they said, an' Dad never took up with another partner. Traveled on his lone after that.

"Seems like Dutch passin' out that way went to his head somehow. He never got over it. Still pretends his partner was with him like it was before. Talks to him just like he was there alongside of him. I passed his shack one night and heard him a-talkin' across the table to Dutch that had been dead fer twenty year—just an empty chair."

Shorty Vance cast a nervous, apprehensive glance about him and hitched his own chair back closer to the wall.

"Ought to send them crazy coots somewhere fer safe keeping," he said. "When they git started like that there's no tellin' where they'll end up at."

"Yeah, it gives me the willies too," agreed Harmsen. "But if it keeps him from a-gittin' lonesome I guess there ain't any harm in it. I'm sort of worried though about the old boy starting out on these hard grinds. He's goin' to pieces fast and the heat out in these hills is a-goin' to cave him in one of these days. Poor old cuss, I wish him luck, but I guess he's about run his course."

Shorty Vance smiled pityingly at the word-picture drawn.

"You betcha I'm a-goin' to have my pile made afore the time comes when I would be asking somebody fer my bacon and beans. I'll stick to runnin' my bunch of cattle over the range. No playin' hide an' seek with a streak of color fer me."

"That's what we all said when we was your age, Shorty," Harmsen broke in paternally. "But let's move inside. The sun is reachin' in here on the porch and besides maybe we can find somethin' cold in the back of the shack somewheres."

THE scorching sun was midway in its course through the beaten painted blue of the sky overhead. The shadows underfoot of the two crawling snail-like, across the terrific expanse of sand and waste looked shriveled and blasted by the withering heat. The stunted, dusty greasewood about seemed to quiver and jump in the dancing heat waves.

Dad Quade hitched unconsciously at the waistband of his overalls, and clucked encouragingly to the plodding little gray burro before him. His eyes fixed themselves longingly on the blue reaches of the foothills before him, still weary miles away.

"Looks purty much like a dry camp tonight, don't it, Dutch?" He spoke aloud in the general direction to his right.

Evidently Dutch confirmed his prophecy for he continued in an argumentative tone of voice.

"You know durn well you puttered around, wastin' half the mornin', afore we could git started. But that's what I git fer keeping a wuthless lazy chlorider like you tied to my apron strings."

His voice rambled on at intervals, as if giving space for his imaginary partner's conversation. If an invisible casual witness had walked beside him, no doubt his actions and conversation would justify the opinion of mental senility and hallucinations. Who knows when or how Dad Quade had first formulated this bit of solitary play acting? Perhaps the why of the start of it all was beyond even his own knowing.

Countless men who pass their days in solitude relieve the tedium by holding conversation with their own selves. It is a relief to hear even one's own spoken words break the monotony of silence. Quade, following a similar formula, had through the years of lonely prospecting, evolved the business of a traveling partner, till through long habit the part of his one-time partner had assumed the roles of reality and worldly flesh and blood.

The shadows of the two doubled their length to the east before the old prospector saw what he called an acceptable camp site. Down into the dry arroya he urged his tired pack animal and stripped the burden from its back. Raggety Ann grunted subterraneously in relief and ambled off for a roll in the sand.

"Come on, Dutch, lend a hand," admonished Dad Quade aloud. "As many years as I've been a-showin' you the ropes you can't throw a decent diamond hitch on a pack yet."

He busied himself with the camp equipment and began preparations for the evening meal.

"Bacon and beans and coffee for tonight, and git the water in the pot to bilin'." He set the utensil aside for his imaginary partner to attend to and slicing the bacon continued in the one-sided dialogue.

"I know you've a-been arguin' all day about a trip inter the Turtlebacks ter work on that starvation claim up there we give up twenty years ago." He took up the threads of an imaginary conversation, evidently in progress throughout the day.

"But the more you side up fer that idea, the more I'm certain yer a-gittin' old and more childlike every day. Now talk sensible and we'll head up inter the Mescal Range ter-morrow and try our luck at the south end of it. I've seen float rock that the Apaches brought in off and on, and it's got ter come from somewhere."

Dad Quade folded up his long legs beneath him and helped himself from the pot of beans before him. On the other side of the canvas pack cover which served as a table was arranged the tin plate and cup matching his own. These were Dutch's and no meal passed but with the table set for two. To the absent one behind the array Dad Quade addressed his remarks.

The argument in regard to their place of activity for the trip waxed heated, Dad bringing out and admitting or refuting arguments for and against his and his partner's conflicting choices. The battle drew to a close finally with both sides resting on their laurels. Tobacco and papers came to view.

"Yer're nuthin' but a round-head with the manners of a chuckawalla and the reason of a pie-bald mule, Dutch," he said bitterly. "I've talked all day a-tryin' to penetrate that bone head of yours by pure quill logic with no luck. It means we'll settle the matter right now in the good old dollar sign way."

He fished in his pocket and from a miscellaneous assortment of odds and ends extracted a silver dollar. This he balanced on the end of his thumb.

"Heads it's the Mescal Range and tails it's that cemetery plot you picked out in the Turtlebacks. And we don't want no yappin' from you afterward. Hear?"

The coin spun in the air and dropped to the sand. Dad Quade bent over it, carefully blowing the sand from the side uppermost. His face clouded in disappointment.

"You win. Tails it is," he announced. "The Americun eagle sits on top, but as a good luck pointer it looks like a roostin' buzzard to me."

"Wonder why they named that bird E Pluribus Unum," he continued aloud. "That's what it says above the picture. Maybe it was the name of the man that drawed it. Greek or sumthin', maybe."

He rubbed the coin between the work-hardened palms of his hands before returning it to his pocket. "Here's to what luck that E Pluribus bird can scratch up fer us anyway, Dutch," he said. "It's plumb certain we're a'goin' to need it."

The old prospector sat smoking in silence as the pools of purple flooded and darkened the draws of the distant foothills. Raggety Ann came sniffing at his elbow for her customary palliative of cold soda biscuits. Dad Quade scratched her drooping gray ears affectionately.

"Dutch," he said. "When we make our pile this trip we're a-goin' ter fix up Raggety Ann with a patch of knee-deep alfalfa to roll in, and biscuits fer breakfast regular, now ain't we?"

Evidently his partner answered in the affirmative, for he knocked the ashes from his pipe, rolled up in his blanket, his feet to the dying fire, and was soon asleep. Above him stood Raggety Anne, her eyes to the east, no doubt in dubious contemplation of the morrow's weary grind to the distant claim in the silhouetted Turtlebacks.

*TAP, TAP, TAP.* The surrounding hills caught the rhythm of its measure. Old Dad Quade was once again at the hard rock game. Hard rock it was indeed, solid stubborn trap rock, and it was slow work. Quade spooned the drill sludge from the hole, matched the bit of the new steel he selected with the worn one he discarded and, modishly moistening the palm of his horny hand for a firmer grip on the polished hammer handle, once more took up the work.

Strike, turn; strike, turn; hand drilling calls for goodly amounts of endurance, skill, patience—a sizable package of the latter. Skill and patience he had in plenty, but advancing years had weakened the old prospector's endurance and both it and his good nature were beginning to fray in spots.

The prospect hole took the form of a narrow, low-backed tunnel in the hillside above a small arroya. A week Quade had spent in and about the vicinity, chipping here, trenching a bit there, his eye on that ever-beckoning and all-elusive thing called "indications."

The chosen spot represented the result of a somewhat lengthy argument between the prospector and his *Banquo* partner. The end in view was to meet, at a reasonable depth below the surface, a certain quartz fissure vein, it's outcropping above being favorable. This attainment as a consequence demanded some thirty feet of drifting. Twenty had been completed and Dad's arm was tiring and disposition curdling. He had no confidence in the work.

"That E Pluribus hole," as he called it, was "just starvation rock."

He minced no words in advising Dutch to that effect.

"I've backed you in poker games where you didn't rate a chance. I've given in ter our picking these fool-proof holes afore now, but there's a limit to ever'thing. My shoulder's tired, Dutch, from everlastingly banging away at that *mañana* rock," Quade said bitterly to the vacant space beyond the coffee cups one evening.

Dutch evidently deemed it the path of prudence to be silent and held his peace.

The days slipped by, one after another, and the side of bacon and sack of beans in the corner of the tent lost their appearance of robust opulence and began to assume a decided trend toward emaciation.

Dad Quade eyed the pile of provisions dubiously.

"Looks as if we was stakin' the hull roll on this dad-blamed hole of yours," he said peevishly. "We've cut the ledge now and it's jest about as wide as yer two fingers. We'd best move on to somethin' wuthwhile afore our grubstake is faded out entire."

The hole it was true seemed anything but promising, and only Quade's bargain of abiding by the result of the flip of the coin held him to the job of completing the determination of its possibilities. As he pounded away during the day at the head of the drill steel he cursed the turn of the silver dollar that had brought them to the location of the "E Pluribus." In the evenings he sat before the tiny blaze in front of the tent, musing sometimes back into the past, weaving in memory's loom the bright colors of halcyon days now long since departed. At other times he fingered gingerly the knee that twinged occasionally with rheumatism and engaged in heated argumentation as to his partner's stubbornness, the advisability of moving camp, and sarcastic personalities.

The drift following the vein lengthened day by day, and still the quartz ledge maintained the scanty width with no indication of values. Finally one evening things came to a showdown. His visualized partner persisted in the illusion of the vein's ultimate richness. He himself was as adamant in his own personal views as to its utter worthlessness.

A compromise was finally effected as the little camp fire settled down into a bed of embers. By the dim light of its fading glow Dad Quade produced the fateful silver dollar, the Delphian method which years of use had molded into a fast custom when things reached an impasse between the two.

"Tails, we stick in one last round in the heading. Heads we move on while the grub holds out to another digging."

The silver coin dropped to the sand. The imperturbable bird graced the uppermost side.

"——," murmured Quade in disappointment. "Jest some more time wasted here."

He eyed the coin in his hand with evident distaste and slowly returned it to his pocket.

"This blamed dollar is a hoodoo," he said disgustedly. "Luck's agin me sure, and if it wasn't my last one I'd heave it out inter the sagebrush now."

He smoked awhile in silence, reconciling himself to the situation and then arose to his feet.

"Dutch," he said more cheerfully, "I'll stick by our bargain, and we'll put in one more round and git it over with. Then we're off to the Mescal Range. I know a place there we should hit it sure this trip."

The next morning he attacked the job of putting in the holes for the final round with earnest determination. The hammer rose and fell, rose and fell, and imperceptibly the steel bit sank its way into the stubborn rock. Then complications arose. The deeper holes began to cause trouble. The rock seemed to be assuming a decided change in character. Perhaps an intruding dike of rock at an oblique angle to the drift or a slip fault. Dad Quade could not decide which. In any event the steel tended to deflect from the true course and began to bind. Dad Quade wrestled with them and sweat and swore, worrying them through to a bite on the new material.

At last came the time when the final hole, cunningly placed to take full advantage of every cleavage plane, was completed. Dad Quade carried his tools out to the mouth of the tunnel with a sigh of relief.

"The last round anyway. I won't have to muck it out. I'll jest leave her lay where she breaks and termorrow it's time we drifted out of this starvation hole to somewheres else. Hope yer satisfied Dutch."

Raggety Ann sniffed inquisitively at his shoulder as he crimped the fulminate caps to the ends of the fuse with his knife. He eyed her reflectively.

"Raggety Ann," he said, "termorrow yer a'goin' to start sweatin' some of that fat off yer carcass you've collected layin' around camp with nuthin' to do but chaw up the greasewood and extra biscuits. Never mind, old gal, you'll be a-kickin' up yer heels in that alfalfa patch yet."

He carried the powder and primers into the tunnel and carefully tamped them into the holes. With the flame of his candle he spit the ends of the fuse.

"E Pluribus, you old buzzard, you better squawk yer last squawk, cause you can roost here till —— good wadin' fer all I care. Termorrow we're a-driftin' on."

He made his way to the portal and sat down to wait for the blast. He did not have long to wait.

"Seven," he counted as the last charge let go.

THE smoke eddied from the mouth of the drift and, caught up by the lazy breeze, drifted indolently down the canyon. Dad Quade sat, silently pulling on his pipe. He mused back over the years past. How many times had he sat as he did now as the final round in the latest hope went off. He did not care to count them. As many times had he anxiously waited till the smoke of the blast cleared out so he might see if it had broken into the expected bonanza vein. The answer had almost invariably been the same. A momentary discouragement and then the ancient lure beckoned him on to new fields and then still another. With the prospector past failures innumerable are forgotten. It is the next prospect, the weary search for the mother lode of the stray float that keeps them always hopeful, always assured of ultimate success. The true prospector is the original dyed-in-the-wool, incorrigible, unwavering, one hundred and ten per cent. optimist.

Dad Quade knocked the ashes from his pipe, rose to his feet, and slowly made his way into the rocky being of the E Pluribus.

The haze of smoke still hung in the face of the drift, blanketing the light of the wavering candle flame. The old prospector stirred the pile of broken rock at his feet disgustedly and turned to inspect the freshly broken surface. He saw now the reason for the difficulty he had encountered with the previous days' drilling. Running diagonally into and cutting across the corner of the tunnel was an intrusive dike, a tongue of rock cutting through and at angles to it. It was harder than its companion rock as evidenced by the fact that the blast had broken to it rather than into it. Its smooth surface loomed black and obdurate in the candle-light—barren, unlovely, unscarred.

Dad Quade inspected the main face of the prospect drift and spat disgustedly. Even the little two-inch quartz stringer he had been following had disappeared, cut off by the dike. It seemed to his old eyes to grimace triumphantly back at him as though glorying in its worthlessness.

He turned vindictively on the offending rocky intrusion and in childish passion, snatching up a discarded length of steel, struck at its smooth surface once, and then again and again. Another barrier—unforeseen. How many had he wearily surmounted and in overcoming found the farther reaches as barren! He raised his arm to cast his tool from him and halted in mid-motion.

His eyes never leaving the fractured portion of the face, he carefully laid aside the drill steel and advanced cautiously as though to maintain the figments of a dream.

"——," murmured Dad Quade reverently. "It's her boys, it's her." His voice quavered in his excitement.

The intersecting quartz dike, rid of its somber cloak of country rock, gleamed dull white in the candle light. Through the matrix coursed the yellow flecks and hairlike threads of virgin gold. The old prospector's shaking fingertips caressed it, fondled its dull beauty.

"Dutch," he murmured, half aloud, "I guess we got it made. No more tramping around punching time clocks on that pesky night watch job o' cold nights. There's enough of the stuff here to satisfy half a dozen men and jest me an' you an' old Raggety Ann to spend it."

Carefully he broke off a piece of the vein quartz to serve as material evidence of the find.

Raggety Ann met him at the portal of the tunnel.

"Look here old gal," he chortled gleefully.

He shoved the specimen against the little animal's prehensible lips.

"This here means seegars fer me an' the alfalfa patch fer you to hold yer devilment in."

Feasting his eyes on the richness of the specimens he carried, he made his way back to the tent. Now and then he burst into chuckles of satisfaction. Forgotten now were the days of patient toil. Gone was the memory of his vindictive attitude toward the prospect hole.

He sighed contentedly. It was the end of a perfect day—almost. Dad Quade awoke to the formalities that this auspicious occasion demanded. He cast his eye on the provision pile in the corner.

"No likker, no nuthin' fer us to celebrate with, Dutch, and it's only fitten' and proper," he complained.

His eye fell on a tin object on a box. Its label depicted a fat pudgy tomato of a particularly opulent pink. He eyed it contemplatively.

"Its the last can of termaters," he said. "We'll open it ter the good luck of the E Pluribus and the health of the wall-eyed old bird below."

He pulled the lucky coin from his pocket and gazed at it affectionately. Unthinking he spun it into the air. It fell to the ground, wabbled a bit on its edge and came to rest. The eagle in bas relief on the upper side, eyed him unwinkingly.

"Tails agin," he said to himself, and then picked it up thoughtfully.

Taking his knife from his pocket, he nicked the edge of the coin. The metal below the silver showed dull and dark.

Dad Quade laughed shortly and returned it to his pocket.

"You win, Dutch," he said. "Between you an' this here counterfeit I jest couldn't beat myself."

A moving form darkened the doorway of the little tent. Two long gray ears twitched questioningly at Dad Quade. It was Raggety Ann, the uninvited guest, in search of the banquet triumphant.

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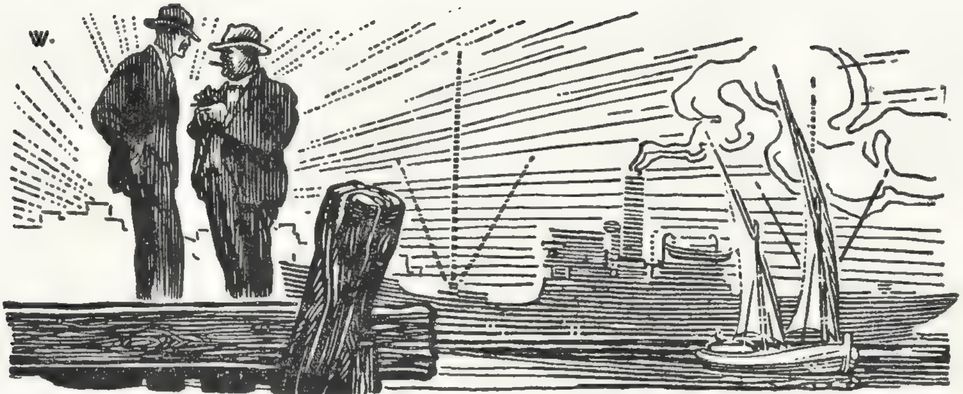


# OBSERVATION

## By John Webb

*Author of "On the Cards," "Eight Seconds," etc.*

HARRY WALLACE, coffee grower, turned as a firm, insistent forefinger came to rest upon his arm. Dislike and loathing, with a strong blend of anxiety, filled his usually good-natured face as he confronted the man who had attracted his attention.

"What now, Brinkman?" he demanded, with a contemptuous curl of his lips. "More blackmail?"

"Harsh word, that, brother," growled Brinkman.

He was a square block of a man with a short, thick neck, a chest that was broad and deep, and short, muscular arms and huge hairy hands, and heavy shoulders that sloped almost from the base of his head. His eyes, sunk deep beneath protruding brows, were a muddy gray; his nose was short and broad and showed signs of much battering in the past; his lips were thick and loose. He wore an air of self-esteem and dignity that, on such a coarse, uncouth man, was ludicrous.

"Yeh, harsh words, brother," he repeated.

He shook his big head in heavy disapproval, put one foot on the string-piece of the pier, and gazed out over Colon harbor, where a small black freight ship had come in through the breakwater and was waiting for the dock pilot to come aboard. Brinkman pulled down the brim of his fifty dollar Monticristi panama to shade his eyes from the glaring tropic sun, and squinted at the steamer waiting in the channel.

"My eyes ain't what they used to be," he muttered. "Comes from bein' socked on the chin when I was a roughneck. I used to be a tough egg. I used to could lick six cops any day in the week. Can yet, if it comes right down to it. No profit in lickin' cops, though. That's all right for the roughnecks. A guy like me ain't got no business hangin' around with plug-uglies.

"Glad I took up *ju-jutsu*," he went on. "Makes a gentleman out of a guy, that Jap stuff. When a bloke gives you lip, you don't have to go slammin' around like a truck driver; you just simply stand 'im on 'is ear and it's all over. Gen'leman stuff, that. What's the use of a man gettin' 'is pan hammered in when— Hey, come back here," he cried suddenly. "I wanta see you."

Wallace had started off, but at Brinkman's gruff command he turned and waited.

"State your business and get it over with," he said sharply. "I have no time to spend listening to you ranting about yourself. I know too much about you now."

"But not as much as I know about you," answered Brinkman, squinting knowingly with one eye.

"Come on, what do you want?" insisted Wallace. "Speak plain and quick!"

"Hold on—ho-o-ld on!"

Brinkman took a cigar-case from his pocket, chose a cigar, then held out the case of Wallace.

"Oh, all right," he said, as the other shook his head. "That highhat stuff ain't gonna get you anything, brother; you know that."

He rolled his cigar between his finger, then frowned and took another, returning the first to the case.

"I can't smoke a cigar when it's dried out," he explained. "The best ain't too good for Georgie Brinkman."

Wallace shuffled his feet impatiently, made as if to start off, then changed his mind and waited. Brinkman fumbled in the breast pocket of his expensive-looking but ill-fitting Shantung silk suit, brought forth a diminutive nailfile, and with his tongue protruding from one corner of his mouth, began to file industriously at a thick yellow nail.

"We-e-ll," he said at last, "it's like this: it's costin' me about fifteen dollars a day over there at the Washington Hotel. Yesterday I hadda buy me about fifty bucks' wort' of clothes; last night I dropped sixty American smackers in a stud game, and then I run into some friends o' mine—busted they was—and hadda do the honors. I'm so —— good-hearted and generous I can't pike along like some guys can. And then, one thing and another——"

"In short, you want more money?" cut in Wallace.

"You guessed it, brother," answered Brinkman.

He polished his nails by rubbing them on the front of his coat, and gazed admiringly at them, at the same time narrowly watching Wallace out of the corner of his eye.

Wallace was looking out over the little harbor, a desperate gleam in his eyes. The small freighter had picked up the pilot and was steaming toward the pier upon which they stood. Several of the corrugated iron drops in the side of the pier shed had been rolled up and a number of longshoremen were standing by the iron bollets along the edge of the big concrete pier, in readiness to receive the vessel's lines when she came alongside.

"That's the—now, *Hawk*, ain't it?" said Brinkman, squinting at the approaching vessel. "Yeah. Her cap'n's got a rep as a fighter, ain't 'e? His name's—what's 'is name?"

Wallace, gazing absently at the oncoming ship, did not answer, and Brinkman went on:

"'One-Two Mac' they call 'im, don't they? Somethin' like that. Got a rep as a tough egg. Slams guys on the chin when they gets flip. Rough stuff, that. Bet 'e don't know anything about this, now, jujutsu. No gen'leman wants to be fightin' like a truck driver with 'is mitts."

Wallace, a wild light in his eye, swung fiercely about, and there was a reckless note in his voice when he spoke.

"Brinkman, I've given you the last cent that I'm going to. You've pumped the well dry. I was a fool ever to try to buy you off. The more money I give you the more you want!"

"A thousand more, brother, and maybe I'll call it quits."

Wallace meditated, then looked hopefully at the other.

"Will you give me that statement?" he asked.

"Well, now, I ain't makin' no promises about that. Give me the thousand, and I'll think it over."

"Not a cent! No more blackmail! I'm through! Do your worst!"

He swung about, but Brinkman caught him by the arm and held him. The blackmailer squinted, and sucked his thick lips against his teeth in a threatening grimace.

"Do my worst, eh?" he growled, putting his big face close to Wallace's. "You leave that to me, brother! I'll do my worst, and it'll be plenty!"

He drew a watch from his pocket and looked at it.

"It's nearly noon," he said. "I'll be at the Washington until a quarter o' five. If you don't put a thousand dollars in my hand before then I'll catch the five o'clock train to Balboa Heights, and when I get there I'll walk up to the Governor's house and send in a certain paper that I been keepin' for a long time. Then I'll just merely walk away and leave the rest to the Governor. Think it over, brother! Remember, the five o'clock train!"

He cocked his panama at a jaunty angle, pulled down the sleeves of his coat, donned his ill-fitting air of dignity, and strode off, his thickset, muscular body moving with an awkward ease that bespoke great strength and ruggedness.

THE *Hawk* slid slowly alongside the pier, backed and came to a stop. Heaving lines snaked out from forward and aft; the eight-inch dock lines were hauled to the pier and the eyes and bights dropped over the bollets. Winches and capstans rumbled, and the manila lines groaned and strained as the freighter was breasted in against the camels floating in the water lengthwise of the pier.

"All fast aft!" came the hail from the second mate, and "All fast for'rd!" came from the forecastle's head. In a few minutes the gangway was hoisted to the ship's deck, and Wallace, who had been waiting on the pier, went aboard and made his way to the bridge, where he found the master.

"Hello, Cap'n Mac," he said, putting out his hand.

"Hello, Wallace."

Captain Mac was a slender little man with shoulders that were deceptively broad. His hair and eyes were black, the latter sharp and quick, and his mouth was a thin, hard line. Between the fingers of one long, lean hand there was a brownpaper cigaret.

"You have a shipment of meat billed to me," explained Wallace. "I thought I'd take a look at it before you begin to discharge."

"Help yourself," said the little shipmaster. "I'll tell the mate to open the boxes for you."

He stepped to the wing of the bridge and tossed away his cigaret, then returned to Wallace.

"I saw you on the pier as we came up the channel," he said. "I was watching the pier through my binoculars. That fellow Brinkman, is he a friend of yours?"

"Friend! Brinkman? No!"

"I didn't think he was. I saw him grab you by the arm, and by the look on his ugly face——"

Wallace said nothing; there began to run through his troubled mind the many tales he had heard of the doings of the somber little fighting man who stood before him.

He remembered hearing an account of how Captain Mac had brought to a happy end the bitter feud of the McClone brothers of Haiti; how he had captured and brought to justice Ted Breen, the murderous narcotic smuggler; how he had saved the son of Abel Lawrence, the president of the Central American Steamship Company, from card sharpers.

It seemed, by all accounts, that the little man was continually getting some one out of trouble. Many of the stories were undoubtedly exaggerated and distorted through repeated tellings, but they all agreed in one thing: That One-Two Mac could always be depended upon to take the side of right, as he saw it. Wallace thought of his own case, and wondered what the captain would suggest if it should be put before him. But no, the case was hopeless, Wallace concluded; he would have to face it out and make the best of it.

"Brinkman reminds me of a man who used to peddle smuggled cigars around the New York waterfront," Captain Mac was saying. "Some one discovered that he made the cigars in his home in Brooklyn. He, this fellow who looked like Brinkman, was a cigarmaker by trade, you see. He was finally arrested for selling untaxed cigars. I don't know what became of him."

"He beat the case," put in Wallace, speaking before he thought.

"H'mm. I understand he did a little blackmail on the side."

"He still does!" cried Wallace. "Brinkman is the man you're talking about." He bit his lip, then blurted out, "Cap'n, you—you know something, don't you?"

The little captain smiled thinly.

"I suspect something," he said. "Everybody in Panama knows that Brinkman lives in good style and does no work. He boasts of it. And once or twice you have been seen to give him money. It got around—you know how Canal Zone people talk."

"It's only too true," groaned Wallace. "He's got me under his heel, Cap'n, and he's squeezing the life out of me. Heaven help me!

"What I did doesn't matter now; I was driven to it by circumstances, but that's an old story and I'm not offering it as an excuse. I gained nothing by my act, and my own conscience forced me to make restitution to every one who lost by it. Morally I'm clear, but legally I'm a criminal, though it is doubtful that a jury, knowing what I have done to make amends, would convict me.

"I left New York and started life again here in Panama, in Las Cascadas, growing coffee. Brinkman followed me from New York. He has a statement signed by two east side gunmen who have since shot each other to death in a Bowery lodging-house. It's a single sheet of paper, typewritten, and if it should be made public the disgrace alone would drive me out of business here. I should have to begin again somewhere else. I should have to sacrifice seven years' hard work! I'd be penniless. And I have a wife and three children!"

"Have you tried to get the paper?"

"I've tried every way! His constant nagging at me for money drove me to desperate efforts to get that paper. I've searched his room three times while he was absent. You know the rooms in the Washington; nothing in them but a bed, a bureau and a couple of chairs; neat and simple, and not a crevice in them big enough to hide a cigaret paper in. I searched it thoroughly, mattress, springs, rug, chairs and all; even the clothes in his trunk and suit cases.

"And one day while he was in swimming I searched the clothes he had been wearing. For all of his ignorance, you know, he's cunning. He showed me the paper once, and so I know it exists; and he tells me he always has it close at hand, and I believe him."

He told the captain of his decision to give Brinkman no more money, and of the blackmailer's ultimatum that a thousand dollars must be forthcoming before the five o'clock train left for the Pacific side of the Isthmus.

"Perhaps I can help you," said the captain thoughtfully. "I promise nothing, but I seem to be pretty lucky in affairs of this sort."

"If you only could!" exclaimed Wallace. "If you only could—but no, you can't, it's impossible; I'll have to either continue paying blackmail to that scoundrel or give up my business."

"It's like trying to decide whether to take to the boats in a hurricane or to stick to the sinking ship, isn't it? Each alternative seems as bad as the other. But hang on a while, and maybe she'll blow over. Suppose you and I go see Brinkman this afternoon? Have lunch with me, and later we'll take a cab to the Washington, eh?"

"I'll do whatever you suggest, Cap'n."

"That's the stuff! Now let's go below and see what kind of pea soup we have for lunch."

WHEN they reached the Washington hotel they found Brinkman sitting at his ease on the seaward portico. Without rising, a surly look on his face, he acknowledged the introduction and motioned them to a seat.

Captain Mac's presence puzzled Brinkman at first, then he decided that Wallace had brought the little man as a witness, in hopes that the ex-cigarmaker would incriminate himself. He told himself that he must be very careful of what he said. He would avoid the subject entirely. When the time came he would get up and start for the railroad station, and if Wallace wanted to talk business, let him come after—alone. Brinkman was not one to worry, not he; let Wallace do the worrying.

He took his cigarcase from his pocket, chose a cigar, and shoved the case across the table. Wallace shook his head and Captain Mac brought out the makings and began to roll a brownpaper cigaret.

"Don't smoke cigars, huh?" said Brinkman. "Well, every man to 'is taste. I always smoke cigars. Smoke good ones, too. This one's too dry." He replaced the cigar and took another. "Can't smoke anything but the best and they gotta be fresh."

"It pays to be particular, if you can afford it," agreed the captain, smiling pleasantly.

"You bet. I buy the best of everything. These kicks, now—" he held out one foot—"sixteen fish they set me back; suit, fifty; hat, fifty; shirt, twelve, and so on. Best of everything. I can't stand cheap truck."

"I think I will have a cigar at that," said the captain, grinding the cigaret beneath his heel.

"Here's a good fresh one," said Brinkman, handing him one, and returning the case to his pocket.

Captain Mac put it between his teeth, but did not light it. He settled back, crossed one slender leg over the other and began to talk. He spoke not of blackmail; did not even hint at it; but of the sea and ships, of men he had known and things he had seen and heard of.

At times he paused, and looked calculatingly at the white water foaming over the breakwater across the harbor, and judged the wind with his head cocked to one side, in the way of a sailor; then he would continue, talking calmly and with a contented note in his voice, as if all the world were at peace and the trouble that was gnawing at Wallace's brain did not exist.

Wallace fidgeted, and glanced often at his watch. It was getting late. Had the captain no plan in mind? Had he given the case up as indeed hopeless? It was with an effort that Wallace forced himself to listen to the little shipmaster's talk.

"—the McClone brothers, of Jacmel. Oh, they're fighters, those two! Big men, and quick, and tough, and each with a punch like the kick of a mule! I once saw Black Michael McClone lift a big Swede clean off his feet with a smash under the chin——"

"Aw, that stuff!" broke in Brinkman, shaking his head disgustedly. "Rough stuff! Gen'lemen don't fight that way; that's the way the roughnecks do. Ju-jutsu, now, that's different. I been takin' up ju-jutsu. A Jap over in Panama City's been learnin' me. I'm gettin' so I'm better at it than he is. I can put a bloke out cold without takin' off my coat and hat. Fact! Now, here's a little trick——"

He stood up and motioned Captain Mac to stand before him. The little man arose, took the unlighted cigar from between his teeth and meekly did as directed

"When you get in close, you work your right or left around like this," said Brinkman, illustrating with one open hand on the captain's chest, "and then you slide it up, quick, like this—*zip!*"

The edge of his hand struck smartly against the captain's adam's apple. Captain Mac gasped, clutched his throat and coughed raspingly and his thin lips twitched with the pain of the cruel and unexpected blow.

"Didn't hurt you, did I?" said Brinkman, grinning. "I guess I did it a little too hard. Good one though, ain't it?"

Captain Mac breathed deeply and twisted his head from side to side to throw off the effects of the blow.

"It's a good, one all right," he said after a while. "I've seen it before though. And here's a better one——"

HE MOVED quickly. He stepped close to Brinkman, shifted slightly to one side, and his left fist flashed upward in a short arc, to Brinkman's jaw. The punch traveled no more than a foot, but landed with the impact of a shot-filled blackjack. The blackmailer's knees buckled and he fell forward into Captain Mac's arms.

"Sound asleep," murmured the little sea captain, and lowered the unconscious Brinkman into a chair, bent over him for some seconds with his back turned to the astonished Wallace.

"He's coming out of it," said the captain, straightening and moving toward his chair.

"Gosh!" exclaimed Wallace. "You did that so quickly that I didn't see you hit him!"

Captain Mac put to his mouth the cigar he held in his hand, lighted it and blew a cloud of smoke into the warm tropic air. He sat down and gazed calmly across the table at Brinkman, whose eyes had opened and were staring dazedly about.

"I struck you harder than I intended," said Captain Mac apologetically. "No hard feelings, I hope."

Brinkman did not answer; he stared at the little man with a puzzled light in his muddy eyes.

"You're too much of a gentleman to get angry because of an accident," said the captain, gazing disapprovingly at his cigar.

"Oh, I ain't mad," growled Brinkman. " 'S all right."

He sat up, took his cigarcase from his pocket and opened it, and after a glance at the contents, seemed to change his mind, for he returned the case to his pocket.

"Accidents will happen," murmured Captain Mac. "Now, I remember——"

And he went on to tell of how a smuggler of narcotics, a member of his crew, had been captured because of an unforeseen happening, an accident.

"Of course, in a way," he concluded, "it was his own fault. He should have known better than to hide the stuff where he did."

His black eyes twinkled as he leaned back and puffed mightily at his cigar. The smoke seemed to gag him, for he coughed and shook his head.

"What're you laughin' at?" demanded Brinkman, suspicion leaping into his deep-sunk eyes.

"Laughing? Oh! Something occurred to me. I beg your pardon.

"As I was saying," he continued, "it was that smuggler's own fault that he was caught. I have observed, after some twenty years at sea, that when a coal-passer wants to hide something he'll inevitably hide it in the bunkers; an engineer will choose either the engineroom or a toolroom; the quartermaster's favorite hiding place for small articles is in the flaglocker;

a wireless man will use either the set or the battery box; a——"

"Say," interrupted Brinkman, looking at his watch, "I gotta catch the Balboa train."

"Sit down, Mr. Brinkman; you have plenty of time. I want you to hear the rest of this."

Brinkman seemed uncomfortable. He crossed his thick legs and uncrossed them; buttoned his coat and unbuttoned it; shoved his hat on the back of his head and a moment later pulled it forward over his eyes. He took his cigarcase from his pocket, inspected the contents, closed the case and put it again in his pocket.

Wallace, a hopeful, half-understanding expression on his face, was watching the captain intently.

"And so, following that line of reasoning——"

Captain Mac paused. His cigar was now so short that it scorched his lips, and he dropped it on the tiles beneath the table and ground it to shreds beneath the sole of his shoe; then, his long fingers caressing one brown cheek as he reasoned, he continued:

"We conclude that if a—er—cigarmaker, say, wanted to hide a sheet of paper, he would be likely to fold it to the proper size and conceal it within a cigar. Sounds logical, doesn't it?"

Brinkman was half out of his chair, leaning forward, his big hands clutching the table edge, a globule of perspiration between his eyes and his thick lips sucked tight against his teeth. Wallace was sitting stiff and straight, his tense stare fastened on the little sea captain, who was gazing absently toward the palm-lined sea wall.

"And if he wanted that paper always at hand," resumed Captain Mac, "he would carry that cigar with him—in his cigarcase, perhaps. He would mark that cigar so that he could identify it from the others in the case. For instance, Brinkman, I noticed that all the cigars in your case have red bands, but one band is a slightly darker shade of red than the others. Now, if you had something concealed in that cigar, you would take it from the case and hold it in your hand when you offered some one a cigar, to make sure that it would not be taken."

Brinkman arose and kicked aside his chair. He snatched out his cigarcase, snapped it open, and looked closely at the contents, squinting and breathing heavily as he did so.

The cigar with the dark red band was still there.

"Whatever I got, and wherever I got it, I'm gonna keep it!" he roared. "Keep your seats, both of you, or I'll shoot you dead!"

One hand holding the cigarcase, the other gripping something in his coat pocket, he backed away, down the short flight of steps to the graveled path, and along the path to the corner of the hotel, where he spun about and ran.

From the direction of the railroad station came the whistle of a train.

"Stop him!" cried Wallace, leaping to his feet. "He's making for that train. He'll keep his word, and I'll be ruined!"

"Sit down," said the captain, clutching Wallace by the coat-sleeve and holding him.

"But he's running off with that paper! He'll take it to the Governor. I'm willing to buy him off. I can't give up everything I've worked for and start over. It's too much!"

"Sit down, I tell you."

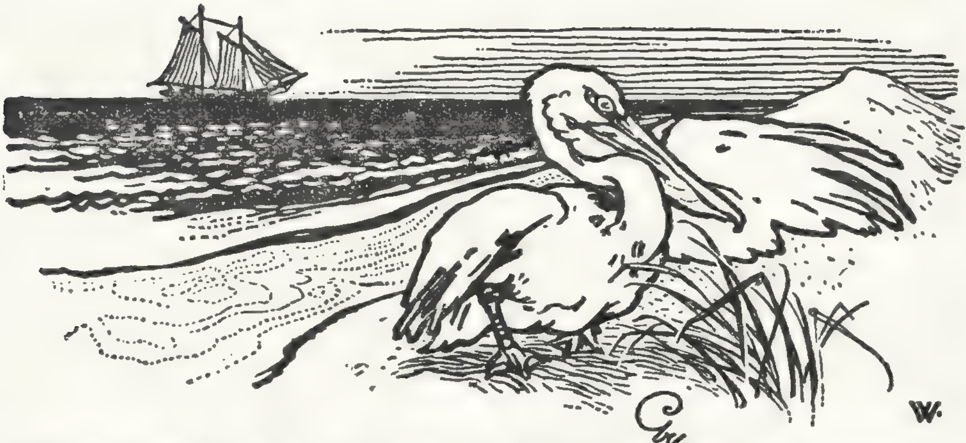
"I thought you could help me," moaned Wallace, "but you've done just the opposite; you've angered Brinkman and he'll expose me to get even. I know the kind of man he is."

"You needn't worry, old man," said Captain Mac; "he'll not expose you."

"What do you mean?"

"I thought you saw what I did. That time I lifted him into his chair, I changed cigars and bands while he was listening to the birds singing. Good joke on Brinkman, eh?"

With the toe of his shoe he lightly stirred the shred of tobacco—and paper—beneath the table.



# WIMMEN AND WORRY

By Charles Tenney Jackson

*Author of "The Watch on the Wine," "Sentimint," etc.*

"NOW, ma'am, our general object in tryin' to get out to the rum fleet is to shoot some news fillum for the Argo outfit," said Cameraman Jim Rand. "As two Texas gents, we'd like to oblige by takin' you along on our boat, but it's your official position as vice-president o' the Anti-Bootleggers' League o' Mississippi City, Mississippi which might get me and my friend in bad."

"Listen," retorted Miss Sweet decisively, "that's why it's my duty to go along with you. I have certain ideas of my own."

She looked about from the hotel veranda and sniffed. Jim elevated his shoulder blades from the cane-bottomed chair where he had been taking a lazy survey of the blue, calm waters of Mississippi Sound southward, and looked at Miss Sweet.

Miss Rosemary Sweet was no sweet southern rose. As "Scamp" Franey had remarked to his boss, he thought she had run to stickers ever since the first Bryan campaign. When the Argo motion picture men first announced that they were going out to negotiate with the rum fleet off Cat Island for some shots at the outside business, Miss Sweet had tied right up with their project and told them where they got off. Now Miss Sweet sniffed again and pointed a firm, skinny finger over in the weed-grown hotel garden.

"Mr. Rand, what do you smell?" she demanded, and her hard little blue eye bored into Jim like a corkscrew.

"Roast lamb with mint sauce," said Jim confidently.

"Lamb, nothin'," retorted Miss Sweet. "Somebody's been skinning the hotel mint bed, but it wasn't mint sauce on their minds. The old rumheads that hang out here every evening aren't interested in lamb dressing. Did you notice Colonel Tunk disappear just now after mooning away an hour with his field glasses watching out there over the sea?"

"The old party in the alpaca coat and the panama? Yes, ma'am, we did. Colonel T. Sambola Tunk, one of the leadin' citizens o' Mississippi City, we understand, and owner of this here famous trick pelican that the newspaper fellow told us about. Yes, ma'am."

"What," pursued Miss Sweet grimly, "do you know about ornithology?"

"Cornithology?"

"No, birds. Especially pelicans. What do you think of them?"

" 'Scamp'—" Jim turned to his assistant who also was hunched down in a cane-bottom hotel chair wondering how long it would be till dinner—"say, pal, what do we know about pelicans?"

"A pelican," asserted Scamp, "eats fish. He roams the sea hijackin' sardines. Beyond that we ain't any ideas about pelicans. A peewee, ma'am, could look Jim and me in the eye with murder in his heart, and we wouldn't know it, we are that innocent, ma'am."

"And what," went on Miss Sweet determinedly, "do you think about those wonderful St. Bernard dogs they have in the Alps?"

"I dunno," murmured Jim. "What they been up to, anyhow?"

"In the Swiss Alps," said Miss Sweet, "the monks train the dogs to rescue fainting wayfarers. They send them out in the snow. Each dog has food and strong drink strapped around his neck. When one of these dogs finds a traveler perishing in the snow he sets down by him with this rum and food and howls for a rescue."

"——," murmured Jim, "think o' that? Wonder to me the dawgs don't get mobbed before they cross the first Alp."

"Yes," said Miss Sweet. "And it gave me an idea."

"Don't spread it, ma'am, in this country. Me and Mr. Franey here, we've roamed this broad and dusty land from Frisco to Long Island shootin' fillum for Argo News, and we can state that anywhere we been a dawg that started out with a Swiss cheese sandwich and a shot o' hootch would be hijacked before he gave half a howl."

"If them Alps was on Broadway, traffic would be blocked with discarded sandwiches," said Scamp.

"In Chicago folks'd be riotin' to find enough snow to get lost in," added Jim.

"In Frisco them Swiss dawgs would all have sore throat if they howled every time a wayfarer hollered for rescue," went on Scamp.

"In N'Awlyins folks'd want the weather office revised hopin' they'd get a blizzard," mused Jim. "No, ma'am, this here Swiss plan might be noble and constitutional, but no dawg could stand the pace."

"Who wants them to?" demanded Miss Sweet. She got up and shook her parasol at Jim and Scamp. "You men are all alike. Vile thoughts are in your mind. I intend to go out with you and investigate. There's so much Scotch in this town that the leading citizens can't read the papers any more unless they're in dialect." She went down the steps and shook a finger at Jim. "And, gentlemen, as vice-president of the Anti-Bootleggers' League, I am going out to that rum fleet with you tonight."

The news film shooters watched her depart.

"You heard her, Jim?" murmured Scamp. "A homin' pigeon couldn't shake a wing over this town without the Bootleggers' League horned in to see if he didn't have a jigger of corn aboard. Here comes this Colonel Tunk who's accused of skinnin' his mint bed lately."

Colonel T. Sambola Tunk strode out from the lobby as if he had been hanging around to see what the vice-president of the League might have imparted to the two strangers in town. Plainly Colonel Tunk was nervous, but he sat down with the air of a man who owned the ocean out beyond the twelve-mile limit.

"Evenin', gentlemen."

"Evenin', Colonel."

"Fine evenin', seh?"

"I can see twelve miles and then some, seh."

"Yes, seh. I understand, seh, you are engaged in educatin' and elevatin' the moral atmosphere of this glorious but arid republic by taking motion pictures of the activities of certain persons, seh, engaged in the arduous but laudable——"

"Help," said Scamp. "What we aim to do is get out and razz the boys who are runnin' the stuff, if they'll stand for it."

"Certainly, seh. I understand you, seh. But I trust you will not heed the insinuations of spiteful and envious individuals who misinterpret the interest which the gentlemen of the Mississippi City Gun Club are evincing in both sport and science, seh."

"Science?" murmured Jim.

"Ornithology, seh."

"Sport?" said Scamp Franey.

Colonel Tunk twisted his white goatee grandly.

"Yes, seh. You may have noticed today, gentlemen, Oscar, our celebrated baldheaded bayou pelican, wending his way home, seh, from the watery wastes off Cat Island, seh?"

"Come to think of it," mused Jim. "We did. This pelican wended home kinda sagged down in front."

"Struck me once he was goin' into a nose dive," said Scamp.

Colonel Tunk parted his moustaches and gazed at the sea.

"Trainin', gentlemen. The gentlemen of the gun club have raised this pelican from a chick, and this year, seh, as a two-year-old, we have matched him against a bird owned by the gentlemen of the S'uthen Yacht

Club in N'Awlyins. Bein' strangers in these parts, gentlemen, very likely you have never heard of the famous sea-goin' sea gull of the S'uthern Yacht Club in N'Awlyins?"

"Everywhere we go we hear something good," said Jim. "But we never did hear of this sea-goin' sea gull. Lead on, Colonel."

"I would not advert to it, seh, except to clear your minds of any base calumny you might hear about Oscar, our racin' pelican. We turn him loose twice a day to do the seventeen miles to Cat Island and back as a matter of trainin'."

"Mebbe it's a handicap," said Scamp. "Carryin' weights?"

Colonel Tunk rubbed the top of his gold-headed cane.

"It may come to that, seh. Against the sea-goin' sea gull of the S'uthen Yacht Club maybe Oscar would have to carry a handicap."

"He sure would need ballast," reflected Jim. "When's this stake race comin' off between him and the sea-goin' sea gull?"

"Mardi Gras, seh, in N'Awlyins. Hope you are there, seh."

"Dawggone—" mused Scamp. "The movie folks'd eat it up."

"We'll be there grindin' the old fillum box," added Jim. "Well, evenin', Colonel. We got to eat and pack the outfits to get out past the coast guard boys tonight. Evenin', Colonel."

"Evenin', gentlemen. I allude to this matter so you will understand the perfect rectitude of Oscar's course if you should meet him out past Cat Island. Evenin'."

THE Argo News Film men went in to dinner. When they came out Jim took a look at the open motor skiff they had hired to get out to the scene of operations past the coast guard patrol, and then he whistled softly.

"That Anti-Bootleggin' lady is on board, Scamp. You see? It ain't no use to argy with a woman. She has ideas of her own."

"This lady couldn't look at an egg without thinkin' o' rum omelets. Now, what'll we do?"

"I dunno. Take her along. Dump her somewheres. I was told to hook up with a rum runner named Sim Hoots. We'll find this party and explain it was no intention of ours to bring out the vice-president o' the Bootleggers' League."

"No, and we ain't inquirin' into the private life of any durn pelican we meet up with. Come on, Jim."

Miss Rosemary Sweet sat on the middle thwart and leveled a pair of navy binoculars toward the sunset. She greeted the two wayfarers with an acid cheeriness. As Scamp said, Miss Sweet had soured before the Swiss invented holes to put in their cheese. She had a bold crafty eye, and her chin was nothing to speak of, but she handled well what there was of it. Jim told Scamp that chins were no good anyhow except to raise whiskers on and catch gravy, and after this conference the Argo News Film outfit clattered away from the wharf headed toward the twelve-mile limit.

"You talk to her, Jim," said Scamp, hanging to the tiller lines of the outboard motor. "I ain't got the heart when I think o' them dawgs runnin' themselves sore-footed."

"You talk to her, Bo. I can run anything except a woman."

"Framed," moaned Scamp. "She bawled me out for smokin'. She said there was nothin' in the Constitution that give me a crack at it."

"There ain't," retorted Jim. "But the janes like it themselves."

So he ducked his head behind the motor and rolled a little Bull. Scamp held doggedly to the tiller and looked at the dim flash of Cat Island light. Anyhow, the outboard motor made so much racket that they couldn't hear what the vice-president of the Anti-Bootleggers' League was lecturing about. Jim stuck his cigaret under his hat and crawled forward where he smoked it over the bow.

The skiff motor clattered for an hour with the argonauts hoping that Miss Sweet would go ashore and spend the night with the lighthouse keeper's family at Cat Island. Then, when Scamp was holding easterly to round a long sandspit, vague under the stars, they all heard a choking hiss, felt a bump, and then Scamp made a grab astern at his outboard gear.

Jim tottered up in the bow and yelled at him.

"It ain't nothin'," murmured Scamp, "except that we run over a chunk o' drifts, and it jerked off the motor. The dawggone motor, it wasn't screwed on tight and it went."

"Well, ——," said Jim. "Excuse me, ma'am, but, well, excuse me——"

"Row," retorted Miss Sweet. "Don't you see those oars? Get me out to the lighthouse at once. Aren't you men enough to row?"

"Row, Scamp," murmured Jim. "Out in Texas I never did learn much about rowboatin'. You row, Scamp."

"All right," said Scamp. "If you don't care which direction we go, I'll row. How in ——, excuse me, ma'am, but which oar do you put on which side?"

"Row," warned Jim. "Most anywheres, you row."

Scamp rowed. He rowed south past the sandbar. He rowed an hour. Then Jim rowed. What water Scamp didn't splash overside Jim did. As Jim said, for two picture shooting cowmen from Texas they did well except that they rowed in circles and uncertain wobbles which drew sarcastic remarks from Miss Rosemary Sweet.

Jim spat on his hands morosely and took a fresh grip. If women vote they should row fifty-fifty, he thought. Scamp wanted to smoke but Miss Sweet disapproved of tobacco and said so sternly.

An hour more of this, and Cat Island light still miles away across the shoal bars, Jim stopped rowing.

"The old lady's snorin'," said he. "I thought it was a motor boat chasin' us down."

"Let her snore," muttered Scamp. "I'm goin' to smoke. It may be unconstitutional accordin' to Miss Sweet, but I'm goin' to smoke. Jim, where we arrived at?"

"I dunno. I see a stick stickin' up on a sandbar. Let's go tie up to it, and go up on the sand and smoke. Smokin' here might wake up the vice-president and she'd raise a yawp. Heave on, Bo."

Scamp wobbled a hundred yards in the late moonlight. According to his ideas it was time to quit anyhow. The upright object in the shallows at the end of a sandbar grew plainer. They thought it was a drift limb until Jim climbed over the bow as the skiff could not approach closer. He waded in the ripples and then stopped. Scamp saw him contemplating that ghostly shape in the moonlight. Then he called to the oarsman.

"Come here, pal. Don't wake up that lady either."

Scamp slid over and joined his friend. Snuggled amidships on the boat, Miss Sweet snored peacefully in the warm midnight.

"It's a cussed pelican," said Jim. "He's gazin' at a fish."

"It's a dead fish," commented Scamp. "Why don't he eat it?"

"Gloomy," said Jim. "No appetite."

"He's a —— of a pelican if he won't eat a fish," said Scamp.

Jim bent closer. The five-foot pelican stood on one foot with his neck looped back on his shoulders and his huge pouch resting on his chest, and down on the wet sand a six-inch mackeral glistened in the moonlight.

"He wants that fish," said Scamp, "but he's battlin' temptation. I never seen a bird so full o' woe. Mebbe he's sick."

"Sick?" whispered Jim going closer still.

"By gum—no! He wants that fish but he can't eat it. Look at his beak, Scamp."

"——," said Scamp. "They ringed his nose, Jim. Sure as little apples, they slipped a ring over his beak so's he can't open it. Take it off, Jim. He's a pet pelican and won't bite you."

"The colonel sure done him wrong," murmured Jim. "Whoa, Oscar. Hootch, that's what it is. They ringed his beak so he wouldn't lose his cargo. He's runnin' the rum patrol, that's what he is, Scamp."

"The old lady's busted 'em, then. Slip that ring off, Jim."

Jim sidled astern of the gray pelican and got his fingers under the circlet which was slipped up tight on the pelican's sixteen-inch mandibles. The baggy gular pouch sagged down on Oscar's brown mottled breast, but when Jim removed the ring the bird suddenly straightened up, opened its jaws and let out a fearful squawk. Then Oscar made one swift jab for the dead fish.

Somewhere else Jim and Scamp heard a scream. Miss Sweet was sitting up in the skiff. The pelican spread his six-foot pinions, arose and soared into the night above her. Miss Sweet screamed again and came overside and then hastily through the shallows to where the two voyagers stood. They were looking down at the sand.

"Scotch, ma'am," said Jim, and pointed at a bottle near his feet. "If it ain't Scotch then I'll eat a kippered kiltie. Scotch——"

"I told you so!" cried Miss Sweet. "Catch him. He's evidence!"

"Oscar shook a fast wing out o' here, ma'am."

"He gave us one grateful look and lit out," added Jim.

"Scotch!" cried Miss Sweet triumphantly. "So, that's it. Wasn't I right about it?"

"A lady is always right. I'll believe anything now, even about the Swiss dawgs that hook out in a blizzard with a shot o' hootch and a biscuit huntin' the weary wayfarer. A pelican's got it all over 'em, ma'am."

"This Oscar's sure a two-bottle bird. I reckon somebody out beyond the limit loads him with Scotch and rings his beak. Now, Oscar, bein' unable to catch sardines out there, heads for shore and the gun club, that bein' the only home he knows of. The old parties there un-ring his beak and start him back. The only mystery is, where does he get it?"

Miss Rosemary Sweet rolled the bottle of Scotch over with her foot. Then she pointed at young Mr. Franey.

"Bury it," she ordered. "I will not have that stuff around. Look at the label? 'By Appointment to the King!' Bury it deep."

"Bury me deep on the lone prair-ee," said Jim." Come on, Scamp. We'll bury it behind them sand dunes. Bury it deep and weep over it. Pick it up, Scamp, and mourn with me."

Scamp started over the sand with the bottle of Scotch. Jim took up the rear, and behind a bunch of salt grass in a hollow, he reached in his pocket. Scamp heard his key-ring jingle.

So did the vice-president of the Anti-Bootleggers' League of Mississippi City, Mississippi. She suddenly loomed in sight on top the sand ridge looking down at the mourning party.

"You bury it," called Miss Sweet. "Hear me?"

"Yes ma'am," said Jim. "We hear you. Bury it, Scamp."

"Hoot, mon," murmured Scamp, and he buried the Scotch in the dry sand. Then he rejoined Jim and Miss Sweet on the dune.

"I buried it," Scamp went on dismally. "Head first, ma'am. Jim wanted to kill it first with his corkscrew, but I wouldn't let him."

"Oh, yeh!" grunted Jim," I had to stick close so's Scamp didn't bite it in the neck, ma'am. Well, let's pull off this sinful and polluted shore. You got your evidence, Miss Sweet, and all you have to do now is go home and have Sheriff Peters pinch Colonel Tunk's pelican when he lands with the goods next time."

"Think of it!" gasped Miss Sweet. "That bird goes out to the reefs to catch fish and somebody hands him a Scotch. It's vile!"

"Mebbe it ain't, ma'am," murmured Scamp. "If you let us knock the top off we'll tell you in no time."

"You'll do nothing of the kind," retorted Miss Sweet, "now you go get that skiff and run it in closer on the shoals. The tide's coming in now."

"Yes ma'am," said Scamp and he waded off in the hazy moonlight.

When he was out on the point of sand Jim heard him yell. So Jim excused himself to Miss Sweet and went out to where his pal stood vacantly gazing around.

"Didn't you tie up that skiff?" said Scamp. "I don't see it."

"Don't tell me it's gone?" whispered Jim. "Adrift with all our stuff in it? You mean to say the tide took it off, do you?"

"I left Miss Sweet in it. When the pelican scared her she hops over and comes up the beach. Well, that lightened the skiff and the breeze pulls it off shore. Jim, we're marooned here on this sand reef with the vice-president o' the Anti-Bootletters' League."

"It'd drive a fellow to drink," muttered Jim. "Only what chance has a good man got? Stuck on a sandbar with a bottle o' Scotch and a lady hootch-hound. Boy, this won't do."

SCAMP followed him back up the sand ridge to where Miss Sweet sat keeping an eye on that spot where Scamp said he had buried the Scotch.

"Ma'am," said Jim, "our boat has gone somewhere, so my friend and me are goin' to drill around this island and see if we all can get off. Don't worry, ma'am."

"Boat?" said Miss Sweet. "Worry? Do I look like I was worried? You go find it. I shall sit here and watch."

"Good night," murmured Scamp when they had gone up the beach. "Watchin' that Scotch. Now look off this side of the island, Jim. Nothin' but water. No boat in sight, and I reckon we lost a couple o' thousand dollars' worth o' Argo equipment."

"There goes a pelican," retorted Jim. "Sailed over us and lit down at the other end of this bar. Mebbe it's Oscar again."

When they got back over the sand dunes they discovered Miss Sweet standing up watching the ground in front of her.

"Look at that!" she cried. "He came and

dumped a bottle down and flew off again south."

"Well, say," whispered Jim. "Scotch."

"You bury it," commanded Miss Sweet. "Right here. I never heard anything so scandalous. Two bottles of Scotch."

"Bury it, Scamp. Kick sand on it. How come Oscar lugs that stuff here? He's free of that clamp on his beak, and he ought to be happy. He ought to go fish, but I reckon he's got the habit now of hookin' up with some rum-runnin' boat and can't quit."

Mr. Franey buried the bottle of Scotch. He buried it with sorrow and regrets, but Miss Sweet of the Anti-Bootleggers' League was watching every move he made. Scamp sat down in the sand and sighed.

They had not waited half an hour for daylight to reveal some rescue, when Jim Rand let a wary yell.

"There he comes! Lit in the ripples, ma'am."

"He dumped something out of his beak, too," said Scamp. "Come on, Jim. This is gettin' bad."

They hurried down to the beach. Sure enough there stood Oscar, the pet pelican, looking at them out of one red and weary eye. On the sand before him lay a bottle of Scotch. Jim rolled it over with his foot. But right behind him came Miss Rosemary Sweet of the Anti-Bootleggers' League.

"You bury that one!" cried Miss Sweet. "Yoo-hoo! Three bottles of Scotch—it's disgraceful. You must stop it."

"Catch him, Jim," said Scamp. "This will get this lady under suspicion. Marooned here with you and me and three bottles o' Scotch."

But Oscar backed off in the shallows, shook his tail and took off into the night. They heard him squawk hoarsely as he vanished.

Jim Rand wiped his brow and sighed when Scamp took the bottle and buried it alongside the others. Miss Sweet watched the operation and sat down near the burial party.

"Can't understand it," mused Jim. "He ought to be takin' that stuff ashore. I reckon, as we took the ring off his beezer, he got shortcircuited and lugs it here instead. Mebbe he's just grateful to us for helpin' him out."

"Let's take a walk, Jim. Daylight's comin', and we ought to find our boat if it ain't gone to sea. Excuse us, Miss Sweet, but we ought to get off this isle before any body sees us. I made out a coast guard chaser awhile ago off there, and how are we goin' to explain bein' holed up here with a lot o' hootch? Jim and me are strangers in these parts."

"We can't allow no bird to plant evidence on us this way, ma'am. We were good to this pelican and he's framin' us."

The two exiles went over the ridge and half a mile up the bar. They could see the tide slowly covering the flat, and as day dawned, there was the higher bulk of Cat Island southward.

"There's two rum chasers outside the bars, Scamp. Mebbe they picked up our outfit. Gosh, there comes that pelican again over 'em! Well, this lady has got to settle it. Those rum chasers ain't goin' to catch me in half a mile o' that Scotch."

Scamp looked back over the sand dunes. he could see Miss Sweet now, and the pelican had landed a few yards from her.

"Come on, Jim. Let's go the other way. I hate to look at it."

"I'm so dry now a Swiss dawg could run me down without any snow. If that Scotch pelican would only land up here behind these bushes he could bean me with a quart and you wouldn't hear a yelp out o' me."

"They could put the limit out twenty-six miles and I'd be the Marathon champion," sighed Scamp. "Sit down, Jim, and dry your tears. This lady has coppered every bet. Who is this king that gets all the Scotch appointed to him, anyhow?"

"I dunno," said Jim. "But it says so on the labels. He must be bad for it. Wait till this Bootleggers' League lands on him. Say, pal, I see a motor launch headin' this way from the main shore. It looks like we're surrounded."

"There goes Oscar south again. Come on, Jim. We better go stick close to Miss Sweet or these coast guard fellows are liable to land us in the hoosegow. A couple o' strangers like us can't give an alibi that'd hold soda water. Too much Scotch around here."

So they went back just as the sun leveled red across the blue waters of Mississippi Sound. Miss Sweet sat on a sand heap watching the nearest rum chaser a half mile down the pass.

"What do you think?" she said acidly. "Nine now. Think of it!"

"Bury 'em, ma'am," groaned Jim.

“There’s a small boat comin’ the other side of this island, and mebbe we can get away. Hurry.”

“Nine,” mused Mr. Franey, “and not a yelp out of one of ’em. That rum chaser ain’t goin’ to bother us, for she’s stuck on the sandbar. A bar full of Scotch—well, say, let’s pull off here before our general reputations are all ruined.”

“Hum,” said Miss Sweet. “If I hadn’t watched you all night you’d been worse. There wouldn’t have been any evidence left.”

Jim walked off and sat down to watch the little motor boat coming from the other side. The sun was now getting hot, so Scamp found him under the shade of a bunch of salt grass mumbling to himself.

“This lady would clabber the milk o’ human kindness,” said Scamp. “What’s that party in the boat circlin’ about for?”

“Tryin’ to follow that pelican. He come in again. They seen him. Tryin’ to head him off from landin’ here. Well, they can’t prove he’s my pelican. If this lady hadn’t got me interested in Swiss dawgs I’d never brought her out on this shipwreck party.”

Jim rolled on the sand and looked through the grass. The tide was creeping in, and the launch was poking slowly along past the shoals. Then Jim sat up and slapped a sea-going Gulf Coast mosquito.

“Say, they got Oscar. The pizen fool floats down alongside and a fellow takes him on board. By mighty, Scamp, he’s playin’ both sides. Why a Swiss dawg would have more sense in this country.”

“Got him? Sure, they got him. I see now. That old party in the front o’ that launch is the same old party we met at the, hotel. Colonel Tunk, and it’s his pelican.”

Jim looked again. The boat had got in now, and some of the crew were overside making fast. Then the three passengers came on up to the sandy hillocks. Jim and Scamp heard an argument which grew in intensity, and they ducked lower to listen, unseen.

THE tall man in the pongee pants and black alpaca coat was undoubtedly Colonel T. Sambola Tunk of Mississippi City. The other prosperous citizen must have been Judge Brandagee. But the short, stout man in the faded green sweater was Mr. Sim Hoots who ostensibly ran a shrimp-fishing outfit outside the reefs. It was Mr. Hoots who voiced a loud grievance.

“Kunnel,” said Mr. Hoots, “your —— bird hijacked me. I been sendin’ him in twice a day with a quart as per contract. He comes out to foller the fishin’ fleet around like any pelican does for an easy meal, and bein’ tame he sits on our lugger. We pack a quart in his beezer and ring him. Not bein’ able to eat he heads home to you. Well, what did I find this mornin’ goin’ on? Oscar got rid o’ that ring, and while Joe and me are off haulin’ seine this bird comes on board the lugger and gets into a case. Holy Smoke, how much has he grabbed off me?”

“He got the habit, seh, when he sees any kind of bottle,” suggested Colonel Tunk.

“Well, no pelican can mop me up that way. I come in shore to complain. You owe me near half a case he lugs off.”

“We never got it, Sim,” said Judge Brandagee. “It’s queer—we come to investigate and find Oscar snoopin’ around this reef. Somebody flagged him down before he could come home.”

“Yes, seh,” affirmed Colonel Tunk. “Furthermore, I trust Oscar, seh, against all suspicions. He’s been imposed on, seh.”

“He’s frisked me for mebbe ten bottles o’ Scotch,” complained Mr. Hoots. “Gents, I been done wrong.”

“Come on, seh,” said Colonel Tunk. “We will look into this. He landed on this desolate sandbar. Inside the limit, gentlemen, so let discretion mark your footsteps if we meet anybody.”

Jim Rand crawled back into the grass. He saw Colonel Tunk grasp his cane firmly and stride down the beach followed by his two companions. Two hundred yards down that way, but on the other side of the sand ridge and out of sight, sat Miss Rosemary Sweet with the tide coming slowly in over the outside bars.

“Jim,” said Scamp Franey,” as strangers in these parts we dont’ belong here. These parties are goin’ to meet. Off in the offing lays that Coast Guard patrol tryin’ to get in and see what a lone female is doin’ castaway on this sandbar. It is no matter of ours what these parties do. We don’t belong here.”

“No more interest here than a Swiss dawg in a temp’rance convention,” agreed Jim. “Move, bo, but where to?”

“That motor boat,” said Scamp. “It don’t belong to us, but this Gulf Coast seem pirates before the Swiss invented snow to get lost in. Hot dawg—come on, Jim."

"I'd crash the pearly gates to get off here before Colonel Tunk meets up with the vice-president of the Bootleggers' League. Come on, Scamp."

They slid over the ridge and down to the beach as Colonel Tunk's party cleared the point at the other end. As Jim hopped into the launch he looked back to see the three standing motionless staring over the dunes. Scamp grabbed a pole and shoved off. Then he yelled.

On the stern seat sat Oscar, the pelican. And swinging in the lee of Colonel Tunk's launch was their motorless skiff which the party must have found adrift on the flood-tide.

"They'll be surprised," said Scamp, and he poled off to deeper water. "So'll Miss Sweet. But I hate to treat a man so. Jim, this pelican looks haggard."

"He had a night of it. Luggin' Scotch all night would tire a Swiss dawg. Start that motor, Scamp, and tow this outfit somewhere."

"We got to get back and pay that boatman for losin' his outboard motor. And it don't seem fair to leave the vice-president o' the Anti-Bootleggers' League marooned with them rum hounds, Jim."

"Well, think o' them. There they come now. They seen her. They made a break for the high grass. There comes Sim Hoots yellin' for help already. Don't let him on board, Scamp. Head for deep water."

Scamp stuck his head from under the awning. The skiff with their picture shooting outfit towed along in the launch's wake. Around the end of the sandspit he traveled slowly until he and Jim could look both ways past the low dunes. Up one side now, came Mr. Sim Hoots and Colonel Tunk with Judges Brandagee hastening in the rear. They acted like men who wished to yell for help but feared to. And up the other side of the reef came Miss Sweet of the Anti-Bootleggers' League. The tide had covered the far end where she had guarded the twelve-mile limit.

"You see?" said Scamp. "Three strong men shudder and hoof out when they meet this lady. Have a heart, Jim. Take 'em on board."

"There she comes, too," murmured Jim. "The three of 'em take to the brush. Who said wimmen was the weaker sex? I ain't so heartless as to leave 'em stranded. Even a Swiss dawg would pull in and rescue 'em. Come around, boy."

"Yeh, and she'll get there first," said Scamp. "I hope there's no hootch on this boat."

"No, but we got the pelican. Shove him off, pal. He's evidence."

"He's off the hard stuff. Let him alone, Jim. Why pick on Oscar when yeh think o' them dawgs gettin' away with it?"

"Boy," retorted Jim, "I'd start for Switzerland now but I hate the kind o' cheese they put in them sandwiches. Land this craft on this isle again and gather in the weary wayfarers."

So Scamp headed around to the end of the sand bar. Oscar, the pelican, sat on his accustomed roost on the stern of Colonel Tunk's launch with the starry jack flapping over his head. He opened a weary eye and gaped and then went to sleep standing on one leg.

"The nerve o' him," said Jim. "And there comes Miss Sweet. These guys got no chance to get away from Miss Sweet."

"Mornin', Miss Sweet," called Scamp. "Why, where you been all mornin', Miss Sweet?"

Miss Sweet came directly on to the motor boat by the beach.

"As if you didn't know! You left me, and the tide coming in. And Colonel Tunk and old Sim Hoots here. Well, you men are all alike."

"Yes, ma'am," said Jim. "Come on, Colonel. Surrender, Mr. Hoots."

The three climbed aboard in silence. Miss Sweet sat on the starboard cushions under the awning, and Colonel Tunk and Judge Brandagee took the other side. Mr. Sim Hoots stayed warily out on the stern deck with Jim Rand. Scamp was down at the engine.

"I'd introduce all you parties," said he, "but let's talk about dawgs. Now, in Switzerland——"

"Never mind," said Miss Sweet tartly. "There were nine bottles, and you go off and let the tide cover them up. The whole thing plain as could be, and now the evidence is gone."

"Oh, say," gasped Scamp. "Is that so? Nine gone on a high tide? Mourn for 'em, Colonel."

Colonel Tunk turned about majestically. "What, seh, might you be alludin' to?"

He ignored the vice-president of the Anti-Bootleggers' League entirely. "Seh, Judge Brandagee and I merely came out this mornin' to pursue our studies in wild bird life, seh."

"Ah," said Miss Sweet. "Of course that isn't your pelican? You never even saw that pelican in your life did you?"

"Pelican—pelican" mused Colonel Tunk. "Ma'am, did you address me? Pelican, ma'am?"

"It's good," murmured Scamp and he advanced the timer full speed, "nobody knows this pelican. He is an outcast—a wayfarer, interested in nothin' but fish. Gaze on him, ma'am."

"I might have known," retorted Miss Sweet. "You men are all alike. If I should say that a pelican landed here last night on the sandbar and brought nine bottles of Scotch, you two wretches would deny it. You would, wouldn't you?"

"No, ma'am," said Jim. "I wouldn't. I couldn't look a pelican in the face and deny it. I'll tell the truth, ma'am, if it retires this pelican up to some zoo in Kansas. Nine—I seen 'em."

"Ah!" cried Miss Sweet. "At least there's one man among us! And what was in 'em?"

"Tell the world, Jim," pleaded Scamp. "Come on, now, everybody listen. Gather around. Jim, what was in 'em?"

Everybody listened. Even Oscar stuck his head on one side as he swayed on the back seat.

"Tell 'em," repeated Miss Sweet. "The miserable rumheads—your word is enough to convict 'em. What was in those bottles?"

"Mange cure," said Jim solemnly, "Scotch hair tonic to rub on them Swiss dawgs you was tellin' about. They got the hide wore clean off 'em in the Christmas rush the last big snow we had in Los Angeles."

Nobody said anything, but the pelican flapped his wings three times and swallowed the last Glenlivet label which up till now had stuck in his craw.

# CALVERT OF ALLOBAR

### A Four-Part Story · Part III

by

### Robert Simpson

*Author of "Neither Money Nor Power," "Bad Business," etc.*

***The first part of the story briefly retold in story form.***

JOHN "JOCK" TODD, agent for the African Produce Association, and his wife, Bella, sat on the veranda, looking out on Allobar Creek. All Allobar was stirred up by the incidents of the previous night, when Calvert, agent for Paller and Co., had been confronted on the creek by a terrifying blue light operated by some unknown natives.

As they talked Calvert, immaculately dressed, appeared on their wharf. After laconic greetings, Calvert, who was despised for his drunken life and association with the natives, asked that he might talk with Zatza the Pure, the native woman who attended Bella.

But from the superannuated Zatza, Calvert learned nothing of what was going on in the natives' minds, or of what he already knew: That the natives had announced their presence the night before by *obu-mandu*, or the decapitation of two slaves, a custom of the priesthood of N'ri of Ibo-land.

Zatza gone, Calvert again told them of seeing the blue light the night before, of having his canoe upset; but he did not tell them that he was drunk, or that he was on his way to see Ruth Kenley, sister of Walter Kenley, the district commissioner.

Suddenly he stopped talking, then cried:

"Well, I'll be ——! Isn't he— Just a minute, Jock. I want to look closer at that chap."

Calvert strode down the steps and approached a native who had appeared on the wharf. He was the same youth he had seen the night before on his own beach.

Calvert learned that the native was from Nishi and was called Biko; that he was to become house boy for Captain Dick Talbot of the West African Frontier Force.

Afterwards Calvert did not mention the peculiar fiber anklet worn by the native, marking him as one in authority.

After dinner Walter Kenley came to Todd's beach and asked that Bella be sent to stay the night with Ruth. Kenley informed the two men that all the whites had been summoned to the government beach, because he feared a native uprising, at the instigation of one called Akka-Chuku.

Bella and Calvert went by gig to the government beach, Jock promising to follow later. At the beach they were met by MacConnachie of the Public Works Department.

He asked the honor of escorting Bella to the Kenleys and showed his hostility to Calvert's accompanying her.

Calvert and Bella refused his offer bluntly and made off toward the house. MacConnachie leaned against the wharf rail.

"Calvert!" he muttered unbelievingly. "Calvert!"

And after a minute or so, when the gig had drifted away from the wharf—

"Something's going to break, sure as ——!"

CALVERT left Bella with Ruth. Over and over in his mind echoed a refrain:

"Tomorrow at four! Tomorrow at four!"

Ruth Kenley had asked him to tea the next day, him, Calvert, white and all but outcast. If he could keep sober, he'd go, he told himself.

His first thought was to get back to his own beach, however.

At the waterfront he met Walter Kenley and reported that he had left Bella with Ruth. At that moment MacConnachie intruded.

"Better give Calvert a bottle and a dark corner and then you'll be sure he's accounted for," laughed MacConnachie.

"MacConnachie," said Calvert very slowly, "your suggestion is excellent. If you'll find the bottle, I'll have no trouble in producing the dark corner."

MacConnachie was not expecting this answer, and said raspingly—

"Get up the beach, you swine!"

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*"Calvert of Allobar," copyright, 1925, by Robert Simpson.*

Then Calvert hit him. MacConnachie went down, unconscious.

A second later and Calvert was worming his way through the brush to get to the beach from which he could take a canoe for his own beach.

Suddenly he stopped.

About a thirty-second of an inch from his throat was the point of a long nastily thin knife. His eyes followed up its edge to the small hand which grasped it.

Then he said casually, amiably—

"Hello—Lali!"

Lali, the daughter of Chief Okpari, had been driven from the beaches on Allobar Creek some time before after telling that Jock Todd was the father of her sister's child. This lie had never reached the ears of Bella. And in Lali's disgrace, Calvert had been the only person who had befriended her.

Now she offered to aid him to his own beach, and he accepted the offer, hoping to get information from her about the impending uprising, for it was known that Lali was closely associated with the Akku-Chuku's defi to the government.

Calvert learned only one thing: That in Ibo-land there was a rift in the plan of uprising, occasioned by the mutual hatred of Zatza the Pure and Lali, both of whom were important personages.

As they approached the waterside, they were challenged by a native sentry. In a moment Lali disappeared into the brush.

But on the side of the sentry's clearing away from the fugitives a twig cracked. The guard started toward the sound. He let out a yell and dropped his rifle. Then Lali and Calvert were slipping through the brush again toward the canoes. Lali, animal-like, had sunk her teeth into the ligament above the sentry's heel!

Easily the two made their way to Calvert's beach, not knowing that they were being followed by Zatza the Pure and Biko, Biko who had called off the sentry but a short time before.

When they reached the beach, Calvert made off toward the bungalow. Lali stayed in the canoe.

A half hour later Calvert returned to the canoe and found Lali in a serious physical condition. Her back had been cut to shreds by a hippo-hide thong, the cuts augmented by a knife. He took her to the bungalow, where he had medical supplies for emergencies.

Late that night Todd came to Calvert's beach to offer his assistance, should MacConnachie make trouble for Calvert. He was surprized and angry at finding Lali there, though his anger somewhat tempered by learning of her condition.

When Calvert started back to the bungalow, after saying good-night to Todd, the native drums had quieted down to a mere murmur.

## CHAPTER XV

### "COME!"

WHEN Calvert awoke and left his bed and stepped stiffly out into his office in his pajamas and a pair of Hausa sandals, Lali was still asleep on the couch; the river, with the morning sun glaring slantwise upon it, still crept silently by with not a solitary canoe showing upon its placid face; and the third drink was still on the little table.

So Calvert emptied the glass ceremoniously over the veranda rail and carefully poured himself the first upon a new day.

Thus fortified, but with the acute understanding that he had muscles and bones in his back and arms and thighs, he proceeded to the galley to see what he could do about breakfast for his guest, who would undoubtedly be the better of more solid nourishment than he cared for in the mornings. After half an hour or so, gingerly poising a large tin tray, he was making his way up the wabbly galley stairs again.

Lali, awake for the past ten minutes, heard the creaking of the stairs and the rattle of dishes, and her wide open eyes waited in a kind of expectant fear for Calvert to make his appearance.

She had discovered the bandages and the aches that throbbed beneath them; also her overcloth, the silk handkerchief and the knife on the camp chair beside the couch. And being now sufficiently awake to remember the why of all this, she was thinking it strange that Calvert should have gone to so much trouble on her account, particularly after he had acted so amazingly unlike himself on the way up river.

So when Calvert appeared with the tray and grinned a perfectly good morning to her, and finally laid the tray upon two dining chairs before the couch and said, "You think so you fit to chop um?" Lali's wonder increased many fold.

She knew enough about white man's food to appreciate the American canned beef, the English biscuits, the Dutch butter, the Scotch marmalade and the Ceylon tea which Calvert had managed to find for her, but she looked more at Calvert than she did at the tray and decided that his master was no longer a little gin in a glass.

This being so definitely the case, she reached for the silk handkerchief and with no little effort and pain tied it once more about her head. Then she picked up the overcloth and indicated to Calvert that she would like to put it on. So he helped her to rise and when this simple business of dressing was completed, he assisted her to sit down again.

Plainly this martyrdom in the cause of

modesty and vanity had hurt, and for the succeeding minute or two, Lali's mouth was a thin, ash-gray line. Her hands clasped and unclasped about her knees, and her body swayed once or twice as if she would topple over. Therefore, since she was so plainly in need of support of some kind, Calvert sat down beside her and gave her the benefit of a shoulder and an arm.

Under different circumstances, Lali was not unaccustomed to this position, but the breakfast tray was an innovation. And when some of the fog of pain had cleared from before her eyes, she began at once to think more of knives and forks and spoons, then of her back or Calvert or food or anything.

She was not unacquainted with these hampering implements, but she doubted, in her present harassed state, if she could make any kind of show of handling them. So she looked up at Calvert and said simply:

"Mebbe so, I better lef' um."

"Rubbish! White man chop be good. Here!"

He leaned forward, picked up the fork with his free hand and stabbed at the canned meat until he had broken it up into smaller pieces.

"Chop this. Be good."

Lali smiled and opened her mouth, and Calvert, knowing she would be much more likely to talk after she had eaten, fed her meat and marmalade and biscuits and tea, not forgetting for more than a few minutes at a time to keep a watchful eye upon the river.

Biko, however, did not approach by that route.

Even Lali did not hear anything until a loose board on the veranda creaked. When she looked up, with all the sharp alertness of a startled criminal, Calvert, with a little marmalade on a spoon, looked up also and discovered two things.

First, that Biko, still clothed in a loin cloth and the fiber anklet, was standing quietly in his office doorway; and second, that he, Calvert of Allobar, was entertaining a lady at breakfast in his pajamas!

Calvert was inclined to apologize to Biko for this, even though pajamas, in certain remote circles of West African society, were still regarded as a kind of undress uniform. And Lali did not get the marmalade. Calvert at once put the spoon down and, suggesting quietly to the girl that she had better rest for a while, he removed his arm and shoulder and rose, vaguely wondering if he should apologize first and find his trousers afterward, or vice versa.

He observed, however, that Lali did not lie down, and that, instead, she immediately began a slow, painful edging movement along the couch toward the long, thin knife on the camp chair. But whether Biko saw this or not, Calvert could not be sure. The Ibo was smiling blandly, and moving not a step out of the office doorway, he said simply:

"I come talk palaver li'l bit. But, maybe so, you bus' too much. One day pass, I come back."

"That's all right," Calvert said, and wondered if Biko's look was one of contempt or pity. Not that he liked it either way. "Lali be sick, li'l bit, dat's all. What thing you want talk?"

Biko appeared to pay no heed to Calvert's reference to Lali; not even though the girl's hand was reaching cautiously out for the knife. Suddenly, however, the hand paused, and presently came slowly back to her knee again; and when this movement was completed, there came into her face an odd, fixed look that, for that moment, appeared to take no further interest in the proceedings.

Calvert observed this, too, but without excitement and without taking his attention perceptibly away from Biko who, with somewhat gasping suddenness, had become quite another Biko in Calvert's eyes.

And then the Ibo was saying respectfully enough:

"All black man say dat foh dis place, you *savez* Ibo man fash' all same you *savez* white man fash'. Be so all black man say."

Calvert did not care for this kind of flattering preliminary. Usually it preceded a request for a "dash" of some sort; and in Biko's case—particularly the new Biko—it undoubtedly suggested a bargain which, to Calvert, was instantly reminiscent of Lali's incompleted proposal of the night before.

Also, it was one thing for a masterpiece in bronze to stand properly on its pedestal and allow itself to be admired, but quite another when it presumed to look down upon its admirer with a decided hint of pity or contempt in its eye.

"All right," Calvert grunted shortly. "What thing you go talk?"

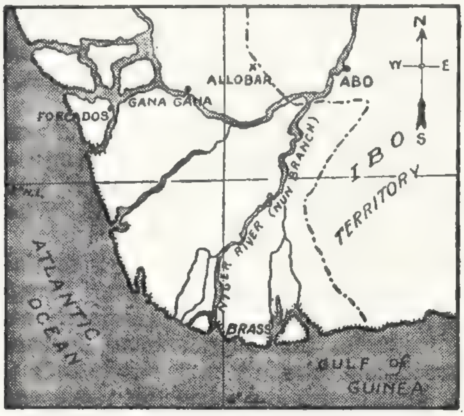
Biko came a majestic step into the room; then another.

"Black man be you frien'?"

"Sometimes," Calvert returned dryly, and leaning the small of his back against his desk, dropped casually into Ibo—

"The bullock that is fed by the herdsman thinks man is its friend until the butcher kills it."

Biko inclined his head like a pupil in the presence of his teacher. Also, he seemed glad of the opportunity to get away from a foreign tongue and back to his own; and after a moment's thought he said quietly:



"The black man is the friend of Calvert of Allobar. For the sons of N'ri and the old men say: 'He is the wisdom of the white and the black, and when these are joined, there is a kingdom.' "

Calvert's eyes widened the merest trifle, then retreated under cover of his bushy eyebrows more suspiciously than before. And when his glance dropped to the fiber anklet Biko wore, they did so cautiously, even though the discovery they hoped to make was one that few white men could have made, and one which the wearer of the anklet evidently felt was not likely to be made by any one in Allobar.

Prior to Biko's mention of the sons of N'ri, Calvert had given the anklet the most perfunctory kind of attention, principally because fiber anklets of all kinds were not uncommon. Now he made quite sure of this particular anklet before his eyes lifted again; and when he was sure that it was a *pineapple* fiber anklet he was glad he had taken John Todd's advice and kept sober.

For a pineapple fiber anklet as Calvert happened to know, was the simple but inseparable insignia of the priesthood of N'ri, worn by novitiate and high priest alike; a valuable little item of information Calvert had not thought of until Biko's glib reference to the sons of N'ri had brought it to mind again.

So he was afraid he was going to need his wits with Biko considerably more than with Kenley, and he was sorry he had used up so much energy the previous evening; that is, if Biko were as powerful and as agile as he looked. However, just to make the Ibo endorse the illuminating discovery that had so suddenly thrust itself upon him, Calvert said:

"The sons of N'ri speak with the voice of a small-small ground nut that is alone at the bottom of the calabash; with a great noise in a space that is empty and wide. For is it not said that 'the street of N'ri is the street of the gods and the makers of kings?' But all wise Ibomen know that this is the lie of fools and of little tongues that prattle without thought of the white man's guns."

BIKO'S head jerked up and back, just as if Calvert had struck him. A queer, broken little cry from the couch, and Lali, something like an automatic doll, toppled sidewise and lay still, one small foot upon the floor, the rest of her lying upon the couch in what must have been a most painful position.

But she did not appear to mind it in the least, or make any effort to change it, and though most of the fixed stare had gone out of her eyes, and her left hand had landed upon the camp chair when she fell, she seemed to be altogether oblivious to the blade that was now so near to the tips of her fingers.

Calvert saw this out of the corner of his eye, and understood it perhaps a little better even than Lali did, and when he stopped resting the small of his back against his desk and stiffly straightened up, he was measuring Biko's jaw just as he had measured MacConnachie's; but much more cautiously because he was much farther away from Biko than he had been from MacConnachie and this was broad daylight.

Then the Ibo's head, which had dropped a little, was lifting again, and he looked at Calvert with that hint of sorrow in his eyes that had been in them when the trader had first met him face to face on John Todd's wharf. And when Biko spoke, he spoke slowly, and more as if he were talking to a man of his own color than to a white man.

"The sons of N'ri and the old men of the villages speak truth. Calvert of Allobar is the wisdom of the white and the black, and where these are joined, there truly is a kingdom."

A pause.

"For the sons of N'ri, as Calvert has spoken, are no longer the makers of kings. The white man's gun has come among them and it has said in a loud voice, from a great distance: 'There are no more kings among the Ibo. I am the king. You will build my roads with your sweat and the fat of your bellies, and you will gather my oil and the rubber that bleed from my trees into the calabash.

" 'And the gods of N'ri shall be as the dust upon the leaf, which the rain washes clean and the river in flood carries down to the sea.' This is the speech of the white man's guns to the Ibo. And the sons of N'ri are scattered, and the gods of their fathers are a small, small voice that walks, whispering into the long, long dark."

Undoubtedly this was a lengthy and eloquently impassioned speech for a sub-house-boy to make, and plainly, Biko meant and felt every word of it. Oddly enough, too, he did not appear to be thinking of the incongruity of such a speech coming from out of the mouth of a native so poverty stricken that his wardrobe consisted of nothing more than a loin cloth and a fiber anklet.

Neither did he seem to be worrying in the least about the circumstance that he might be running a considerable risk in these drum-beating, head-chopping times, talking to a white man after that fashion.

Evidently he was taking a great deal for granted, either because he felt he could afford to, or because he believed that Calvert, who had no standing among white men—at least not on the government beach—would like to hear that he was something of a king among the black.

Calvert did not regard this point of view as being at all flattering, and a moment's reflection made him decide that Biko was even more insulting than MacConnachie had been, largely because he knew that Biko's remarks about his wisdom were mostly soft soap administered for a purpose yet to be determined.

Therefore, Calvert concluded, in spite of Lali, that it would be advisable not to hit Biko too soon. He felt it would be worth while to learn just why the Ibo had relieved himself of so much imflammatory talk all at once, and why he should have so much to say about his, Calvert's, wisdom, if he did not think he was in any danger of being kicked down-stairs.

So, having given Biko's speech the long and serious consideration he was expected to give it, Calvert, ever with an eye on the river, made up his mind to be sympathetic.

"White man gun make trouble too much for Ibo man," he said, and spoke in pidgin purposely to indicate that he was still white, and would probably remain so until Biko became more explicit. "Ibo be fool long time. What's matter Ibo man no get sense foh him head and *savee* gun palaver all same white man?"

Biko smiled. But it was a smile of pity for the Ibo, and when he answered he did Calvert the honor of speaking in Ibo.

"Even the white man did not sit down under a mango tree and say to his brother who killed his meat with a stone: 'I can not kill my meat with a stone. Before the sun goes down, I will make me a gun that will kill my meat for me at a greater distance than the eye can see.' " Biko paused. "Did Calvert of Allobar's father kill his meat with the same gun that Calvert does? Did Calvert's father's father shoot with the same gun as *his* father did?"

Biko answered his own questions by shaking his head.

"No. The gun of the white man is not a thing to be made and known between the sun's coming up and going down. Even the white man who points the gun of many mouths from his wharf at the Ibo upon the river, knows that this gun of many mouths was not known to his father."

CALVERT nodded to all of this, and, at the same time, wondered where Biko had managed to pick up so much information. And, being more convinced than ever of the necessity of finding out just what was the purpose of this early morning visit to him, Calvert suggested hospitality.

"Maybe so, Biko like li'l bit gin? Talk be so-so dry mouth palaver."

Biko's eyes smiled as well as his mouth this time, but he did not include Lali in his joy; not even when Calvert left the room to get the bottles and glasses. Lali, for her part, showed no sudden animation either.

Whatever bond there was between Biko and herself did not reveal itself in this interval.

Presently, Calvert returned. He had had to go out to the veranda for the brandy, and to the dining-room for an extra glass and some ginger ale which he somewhat mysteriously transferred to an empty whisky bottle; and he had made a point of passing through his bedroom where he found his revolver which was now in fixed concealment beneath his pajama jacket.

He did not think he would have to use it, but, with a native who wore only a loin cloth, yet spoke so harrowingly of the scattered sons of N'ri and so enviously of breechloaders and machine-guns, it was as well to be prepared for anything.

So he poured Biko enough straight brandy to make three white men talk fluently, while, with no inconsiderate self restraint, he treated himself to ginger ale. But Biko, after the first courtesy mouthful, was evidently in no hurry to take full advantage of Calvert's generosity. In fact, he seemed to be so intent upon what Calvert would do with his drink that he had no time to think of his own.

Therefore Calvert, becoming aware of this, did his best to be obliging. Talking alternately in pidgin and Ibo, of guns and yet more guns, and particularly of the machine-gun that stood on the government wharf, because Biko seemed to want him to, Calvert accommodated Biko by becoming what John Todd would have called "bletherin' drunk" on three long and awful glasses of ginger ale.

This was not farce. It was not even humor. To Calvert of Allobar it verged on tragedy. For it is not given to every man to be himself as others see him, and to have to see it through on ginger ale.

But, standing in his office doorway, balancing himself upon his heels, he shook his fists in the face of government and hurled vitriolic damnation upon his white brothers down river. Then he reeled back to his desk again and, lolling drunkenly against it and over it, he cursed the curse of long distance shooting more violently than Biko had ever found words to do. And presently, with swaying uncertainty, he laid a hand familiarly on the stalwart Ibo's shoulder and said mouthingly in the native's own tongue, which was by no means an easy thing to do:

"I am Calvert. Calvert of Allobar. In me is the wisdom of the white and the black. In me there is a kingdom!"

A lengthy, dramatic pause.

"And Biko is my friend."

He thrust Biko away with a friendly but superior gesture and, swaying this way and that, managed to strike an attitude.

"I will walk the street of N'ri. I will become a maker of kings. With Onwu-Biko, the great one, I will walk, whispering in his ear alone of the white man's guns that speak from a great distance, even the gun of many mouths that stands upon the white man's wharf and points at the Ibo upon the river. I am Calvert! Calvert of Allobar. So hear me Biko, thou last born son of thy mother, I will teach you all things that the white man knows and first, I will teach you of the guns!"

He saw the quickening eagerness in the Ibo's eyes, and when Calvert again lurched back against his desk, he continued to mumble about guns.

And presently Biko, who had been careful not to commit himself too far, shot a quick, sharp glance in Lali's direction and said in a low and suddenly commanding voice—

"Come."

Calvert's chin was on his chest rolling this way and that, and as it rolled his eyes shifted blearily to the couch.

Lali was rising to her feet without any assistance and apparently was feeling no pain, and when she had risen, she walked directly toward Biko to a given point, then turned in the direction of the office door. Her step was steady and natural and, if Calvert had not had ocular proof of the ugly slashes across her back, he would never have suspected their existence from the easy manner with which the girl carried herself.

However, he was not even astonished. He had seen numerous evidences of all kinds of telepathic and hypnotic control in the native villages round about, and all through the Delta for that matter, and though he had never seen an Ibo Svengali so brazenly at work, such powers in a man like Biko did not surprize him in the least.

But they disturbed his plans considerably. He could not allow Lali to escape like this, particularly since he knew now that the girl probably did not want to go, and that this "inspiration in bronze" very likely knew more about the flogging she had received than he would care to tell.

Consequently, in the few seconds at his disposal, Calvert had to do some remarkably quick thinking. The simplest thing and, apparently the most direct, was the revolver. But Biko was only one. He might, as Calvert had reason to suspect, be the head and shoulders of the whole business; and then, he might not. To be quite sure of this, it would be better to have Biko lead the way to the others, and particularly to the fountain head, if he did not so happen to be the fountain head himself.

Thus, Calvert remained drunk, and as is sometimes the habit of those who drink too much, be they white or black, he became violent when he saw Lali stepping so lightly out through the office doorway.

"What's matter?" he demanded suddenly and truculently of Biko, and moved menacingly toward him. "What you go do? What you go take dat Lali 'way foh? She be my woman!"

Biko backed a step and then another; then put out a quieting hand to stay Calvert's advance.

"She be sick woman," he said placatingly. "I go take her 'way so she go be besser. Den she come back."

Calvert's expression became decidedly ugly.

"You think I be fool!" he yelled and doubled his giant fist and shook it within a foot of Biko's jaw. "You lef' dat Lali foh dis place! You go lef' her, or I go break you head all same biscuit!"

Biko backed another step. He did not want to offend Calvert; neither, for many reasons, did he want to leave Lali behind him. Then, possibly he remembered that Calvert was only a poor white fool whose master, at any time, was a little gin in a glass and who would be just as pliable in the matter of guns after sunset, as he had proved himself now.

In any event, Biko ceased to be a simple native in a loin cloth and became a man of might—and in a twinkling.

His lithe body stiffened and snapped forward. His long, powerful arms reached out with all the unpleasant effect of two bronze-colored snakes striking at once.

Calvert felt the touch of them upon his ribs—just a touch—but it was quite enough to make him very glad that his good right fist had to travel little more than a foot.

And he did not "pull" that punch.

But the uncanny thing about it all was how Lali, just a step or two beyond the office doorway swayed and floundered to her knees, just as if Calvert had struck *her!*

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE UNWINKING EYE

FOR several minutes Calvert was an exceptionally busy man. There being no rope immediately to his hand, he was compelled to ruin a perfectly good linen tablecloth so that Biko's wrists and ankles and mouth would not be free agents when he came to himself again.

And when he carried Lali to his assistant's room beyond the saloon—this process being quicker than allowing her to walk—he said—

"Plenty soon we go hab no linen for dis Paller beach."

But Lali did not smile. With terror staring out of her wide open eyes, she asked just as she had been asking every few seconds since Biko had dropped like a felled ox:

"What you go do foh that Biko? You no fit! You no fit! He go kill you foh him eye! What you go do?"

Calvert countered with several questions that had been equally stock in the past few minutes:

"Be him flog you? Be him cut your back all same you be so-so piece pork beef? What's matter? You fear that man *ju-ju?*"

That Lali feared Biko's power of thought control, or whatever semitrancelike state he had the gift of inducing in her, was so obvious that Calvert's final question was wholly unnecessary. And apparently she did not believe that being moved to another room would make any difference. When Calvert placed her in his assistant's most comfortable chair, she immediately asked again:

"What you go do foh dat Biko? I no fit to sit down foh dis place! I fear! He go kill you one time! And when he fit to kill *you*, what so-so sick woman go do?"

Calvert glanced toward the river, then back at Lali.

"Sof'ly," he advised quietly, but she clutched the sleeve of his pajama jacket in a pitiful frenzy.

"I fear!" she whimpered. "Dat Biko go make me craze! I be Lali! I be big woman foh dis place! I *savez* white man fash' long time! But I craze them time Biko eye done look me!"

Calvert nodded. He had known cases of the kind, but most of them had been obsessions carefully suggested by material means, the sight of a beetle, or the sudden smelling of a specific odor, or the sound of dripping water, or the feel of the inside of a banana skin against the neck or breast; any one of a thousand and one simple and often ridiculous suggestive tricks that had been carefully linked up in the victim's mind with a subsequent state of hypnotic terror.

As a rule, too, the worker in this kind of black magic was much older than the victim, so that Biko had evidently been learning his art from infancy, and his effect upon Lali had apparently passed the stage where any kind of material suggestion was necessary.

As a result of assiduous practise upon his deliberately chosen victim, Lali had become so accustomed to the conception of Biko's power to make her do anything he happened to want, that his very entrance into a room, if it were accompanied by the merest gesture or look, immediately placed Lali in a subjective state, in which she remained until the power was, by some means or other, withdrawn or shut off.

When she had so desperately reached for the knife, she had simply been trying to assert an independence that was still fighting for its life, and now that Calvert had released her from bondage, it was not unnatural that she should, in her present terror, fling herself upon his protection and be correspondingly afraid of him coming within the destructive radius of Biko's eye.

She did not know how Calvert had brought about her release. When she had fallen to her knees and finally realized that, somehow or other, Biko had gone, she had turned her head and found Calvert kneeling on Biko's back, binding his wrists behind him with strips of white cloth. And, of course, she knew that mere strips of cloth, however tough, would never hold a man like Biko.

"What him name? Him propah name?" Calvert asked presently "Akka-Chuku?"

Lali looked up quickly as if Calvert's most casually offered suggestion had confirmed a suspicion of her own.

"I no *savez*," she whispered. "He neber talk him name foh me. Be Biko all man say."

And here, though Calvert found it hard to believe, Lali was speaking the truth. Even she did not know the real Akka-Chuku; and as if to make Calvert believe her because she was, for the time being, so terrifiedly in need of his protection, she went on as if the words could not tumble out fast enough.

"Be Zatza do um! Biko be Zatza frien'. And all same she want foh kill me, li'l bit, li'l bit, she make him make *ju-ju* foh me! I go craze! I no *savez* dis *ju-ju!* Them time they flog me, I no *savez* they do um!"

Calvert's eyebrows lifted sharply.

"What's matter? You no *savez* which man flog you and cut your back!"

Lali shook her head violently.

"No! Suppose I *savez* he go do um, he no fit to do um. I go cut him belly and him throat."

Calvert believed this and was glad to see that the real Lali was not altogether cowed by the terror of Biko's *ju-ju*. But seeing that she was so indignant about the flogging, he persisted in being skeptical of her lack of knowledge of it, with the result that Lali poured forth more words, Ibo and pidgin almost inextricably mingled, and bit by bit Calvert came into possession of most of the story he was after.

Some of it he had already guessed and by assuming a greater knowledge than he possessed, made Lali gape and then haltingly supply the missing chapters.

* * *

OF BIKO himself she knew nothing, or would tell nothing, save that he had come into her life several months before while she had been up in Nishi. Apparently, with Lali, it had been a case of love at first sight, and Biko, either at Zatza's instigation, or because it happened to fit in with his own purposes, had made the most of Lali's infatuation, until he had completely subjected her to his will.

This accounted for Lali's recent desertion of the trading beaches and her somewhat sudden and unusual intimacy with those whose sympathies were opposed to the government of the gun.

But after a while, the girl's passion for Biko had turned to fear, of which her present state was a fair example, and her one consuming hope lately had been to escape from the terrorizing domination of Biko's calm brown eyes.

The previous evening, upon the promise of a prophecy that freedom would come to her if she would blow the machine-gun on the Government wharf into the water, she had undertaken the task, under Biko's personal supervision and with a sufficient quantity of gunpowder supplied by him.

Apparently Biko's power over the girl was not sufficiently strong to induce her to continue in a hypnotic state and do whatever he wished, whether he remained on the scene or not. Also he had evidently been of the opinion that Lali would do surer and better work if she were just Lali, than if she were wound up and put into action like a mechanical toy.

So, though he had accompanied her to see that the thing was done, Lali had been altogether herself all throughout her adventure on the government beach. And the thing, as Calvert had suspected, she had wanted so badly as to take so desperate a chance to attain had been nothing more than the privilege of being able to hate Biko without fear of the consequences.

It is doubtful if she believed that blowing the machine-gun into the river would bring her the freedom she so desired, but being between the —— and the deep sea, she had been willing to clutch at any straw.

However, Calvert's straight, short right to MacConnachie's jaw gave her no opportunity to prove whether Biko's promises or prophecies were worth anything or not.

For it was this simple but far-reaching little incident that had intervened between Lali's gunpowder and the machine-gun. It had brought altogether too many white men, Hausa soldiers and native police to the water-front at the same time, so that even Biko had ultimately to admit the futility of attempting the business further that evening.

As they had retreated to revise the plans and discuss the possibility of continuing after the excitement had died down, they had caught sight of Calvert making his way toward the bush, traveling, just as they were, on his stomach.

Suspecting that he wanted to get back to his own beach, Biko relegated Lali to the task of leading him there, so that he might drink as much "gin" as he wanted, and thus become informative about guns. It had been Biko's intention apparently to make as much use of Calvert in this direction as he possibly could, and the Ibo had naturally assumed that Calvert would be more useful under the influence of liquor than otherwise.

Lali had done her best. But on the way up the river she had been compelled to come to the conclusion that Calvert had suddenly and most mysteriously changed; and by the time they had reached the gig-wharf she had become so convinced of this, that a crushing sense of oppression had seized her.

It did not seem that anything she tried to do to gain her freedom, or even to please Biko so that he might not give such ready ear to Zatza's lies, worked out as she hoped it would. As she explained to Calvert:

"Long time I *savez* gin be all same headman foh you. But them time we come foh dis beach in canoe, I think gin no be headman foh you no mo'. I think them time big palaver live, you *savez* gin be no good foh man belly—and so you lef' um."

Calvert grinned and wondered how she had guessed it. But Lali did not answer that grin in kind. To her, their arrival at the gig-wharf had been no laughing matter; and realizing the futility of trying to make Calvert drink or talk, if he did not so happen to want to do either, she had not bothered to leave the canoe.

And presently Biko and Zatza, who had been trailing them all the way up river, had sidled alongside the mangrove stick breakwater, opposite the powder store, which naturally occupied an isolated part of the beach, out of Calvert's range of vision.

All of the powder and lead shot and Dane guns—on a par with similar stock on the other trading beaches—had been removed to the government beach along with Ferguson and the Kroo-boys, so that Biko had no designs upon the powder store when he slipped alongside the breakwater at that place. He simply wanted to inquire of Lali, in a quiet place, why she did not go on with the program.

Lali's state of mind was such that when she answered Biko's summons she left her knife in her canoe. In her own words:

"I no *savez* what thing happen. They come foh powder store side, Biko and Zatza, and Zatza make big palaver foh me. She say I be fool. She say I be white man frien'. She say—she say she go flog me one time! Me! Lali! She say she go flog *me!* So I go catch knife——"

Then Lali shook her head slowly, very slowly.

Of course, the knife was in the canoe. But this was not what disturbed her. She never knew whether it was in her waist-belt or not, because her hand did not travel that far. Just as in Calvert's office—

"My hand no get sense foh him fingah and—and all man go 'way long time."

This was Lali's way of saying that everything about her went black—or a sensation to that effect; and when she came to herself again she was alone and in very bad shape. The light of Calvert's standlamp had drawn her to it and her story had ended at Calvert's feet.

"I no savez them Biko man *ju-ju*. I no *savez* Akka-Chuku. White man be my frien' long time!"

Then abruptly:

"What you go do foh that Biko? Him eye go kill you!"

"Be all right," Calvert assured her and tried to make it convincing. "Me, I go fix. I *savez ju-ju* all same Biko. Wait."

"What you go do! You no fit! Dat Biko man——"

Calvert did not wait to hear the rest of it. He thought he had delayed too long as it was, and when he reached the top of the stairs on his way to the office, he had ample evidence of this.

STILL tied hand and foot, and the gag still in place, Biko had wriggled and twisted his way out of the office, and was on the verge of allowing himself to roll downstairs when Calvert reached him. Apparently the Ibo did not care what happened to some of him, so long as most of him got away. Also he seemed to be too busy thinking of this to have any time for hypnotism.

Calvert managed to place his large bulk between Biko and the stairs, and when the Ibo paused, only to try more desperately than ever, probably thinking he could use Calvert as a kind of cushion on the way down, the trader showed him the revolver and invited him to take a good look at it.

Biko did. So Calvert took the opportunity to give him his first short lesson on guns. He showed Biko the muzzle and made an indentation with it near the centre of Biko's anatomy, so that the Ibo stopped wriggling and leaping around like a particularly lively eel, and allowed Calvert to kneel upon his stomach in peace.

In this conquering attitude, Calvert tried to decide what should be done with this man who knew so much about black magic and hobnobbed with Zatza the Pure, and made her hates his own.

There was no sign of Kenley or of any of the government launches that usually puttered up and down river every day. Calvert had seen a gig-boat belonging to the Oil Rivers Company come sweeping up from the government beach while he had been talking to Lali, but aside from a straggling canoe or two, this had been all the life the river had shown all morning.

Every now and then, Calvert thought he heard the faint, far-off rumble of the drums, as if the tireless tom-toms had decided to do their recruiting at a safer distance from the government beach. Then again, as he had told Bella Todd, it might be just "*ju-ju* play palaver" in honor of the breath-taking sacrificial ceremony on Allobar Creek.

In any event, he was reasonably sure that Akka-Chuku was not quite as ready to fight as Kenley supposed, and if Biko and the priest of N'ri happened to be one and the same, the probability was he would never be as thoroughly ready as he would like to be; not if he were waiting to learn all about the white man's guns before he started!

Glancing down into the baleful look in Biko's eyes, which indicated only too plainly how much he disliked having been tricked, Calvert had but little doubt about his real indentity. His gifts were too numerous and his passionate desire to call back the scattered sons of N'ri to some semblance of their former glory was too personal to be that of a mere underling.

Also, his intimate association with Zatza, who, in private life, associated only with those who knew enough to appreciate her at her true and awful worth, was the surest kind of evidence against him; particularly since he had, according to Lali, accepted Zatza as a kind of partner whose hates he thought it worth while to consider and even pamper.

Therefore, since Calvert was so strongly convinced of all this, it was imperative that Biko be taken into custody and placed where he was likely to do the least harm to the community.

Unfortunately, only Lali's canoe was at Calvert's disposal, and while it would not be altogether impossible to induce Biko to paddle himself to jail, it was not the kind of responsibility Calvert cared to undertake in such limited space as a two-paddle canoe would afford—not with a man as slippery and swift as the Ibo.

More than this, with Lali under his protection, Calvert did not think it would be advisable to leave her behind to the tender mercy of Zatza who, he was quite sure, was somewhere near at hand, waiting to learn the result of Biko's visit.

Thus, there did not seem to be anything left to do but to await the probable arrival of the government launch; and when he had finally decided to do this, he ordered Biko to wriggle and roll himself back to the office so that he, Calvert, could devote all of his attention to dressing, which included the important duty of selecting a pair of trousers that would do justice to the possibility of a call upon Ruth Kenley at four. This was necessary because the other, sacred pair had too much government lawn upon them to make them available for the occasion.

And as he superintended Biko's wriggling, which led toward the old black desk and the brandy bottle upon it, Calvert thought if he made the second drink several little ones, comparative sobriety at four o'clock would not be altogether impossible. Of course, it was not likely that he would be able to keep the four o'clock appointment, but there could be no harm in being prepared for emergencies.

So he bound Biko to the legs of the desk, both neck and feet, and drank a little drink as compensation for the ginger ale he had consumed. After which, with one eye on the river, he began to dress.

No one interrupted him. Even Lali remained a fixture in Ferguson's room, cowering in Ferguson's best chair as if she expected Biko to appear in the doorway any minute.

For a little while, Biko did his best to detach himself from the desk, but presently he seemed to come to the conclusion that violence was not producing much results, so he lay quite still, fixed his eyes upon the door and kept them there with a curiously calm, unwinking steadiness that had a world of assurance behind it.

Calvert, from the moment he first became aware of that look, began to feel rather nervous about it, principally because he knew at once what it meant. He had seen native witch-doctors, whose gifts were insignificant compared with Biko's, perform numerous apparently supernatural tricks through the medium of that same unwinking stare that nothing could drive from its purpose once it became properly and firmly set.

Sometimes the result was evil, such as the uncannily willed suicide of a thief who had run away and could not be found. Sometimes it was good, such as the curing of the sick who were inhabited by devils, or compelling the return of the prodigal son to his father who had, of course, paid the witch-doctor in advance. And sometimes, for any one of a dozen most plausible reasons, the result was nothing at all.

Biko, however, betrayed no fear of failure. Whatever or whoever it was he expected to make an appearance in the doorway was not clear, but that the specific something or some one would appear, he did not seem to have the slightest doubt.

When the thing began to get on Calvert's nerves, as it might have been expected to do, he went so far as to pass the flame of a candle before Biko's eyes in an effort to break the spell; but the eyelids did not even twitch, and the eyes continued to stare as quietly and as steadily as ever.

So that Calvert, somehow or other, lost track of the number of the little drinks somewhere between the selection of a pair of gray flannel trousers and a visit to Lali to discover if Biko's *ju-ju* stare was being directed at her.

APPARENTLY, however, Biko had other fish to fry. And Lali, who was still seated in Ferguson's chair, seeming to become more at ease every minute, observed the effect of the uncounted little drinks upon Calvert before he realized it himself.

It was this that brought her out of the chair, fear taking the place of hypnotism in making her forget the raw and ragged pains in her back.

"You craze?" she asked in hoarse unbelief. "Biko live foh dis place—and you go drink too plenty gin!"

Calvert, shaved and otherwise properly accoutred, stood looking at Lali solemnly for a long time, without uttering a sound.

He knew now he was drunk and to get drunk unawares and on little drinks was disgraceful. But the judgelike look that always accompanied his inebriated state became even more profound. "Little drinks, Lali, like little women," he said at last, "are a delusion and a snare."

A heavy pause.

"But we shall remedy that as far as we may. Pardon me just a moment."

So he straightway made the little drinks big ones, and thus redeemed some measure of his self-respect.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE ANSWER

DOWN-river, and particularly on the government beach, the quiet of the night had given way to the lazy drone of the morning. Except for Calvert's and the Oil River's Kroo-boys in the roped-off compound on the cricket field, and the scattered but nonetheless visible presence of Hausa and Yoruba soldiers carrying rifles, there was little or nothing to suggest to Bella Todd that her visit to the Kenley's had had any justification of any kind.

For an evening and morning she had enjoyed all of the sensations of a country cousin on a duty visit to her uppish city relatives, and if it had not been that the queer memory of the slaughter-house odor persisted in coming in spasmodic waves to her nostrils, much as the fitful and distant beating of the drums continued to come to her ears, the prospect of being "put up wi' " by Ruth Kenley for another day and night would have become intolerable altogether.

However much Ruth believed that she was being everything a hostess ought to be, she was not, consciously or unconsciously, fooling Bella to any extent. Bella knew where she belonged and it was not at the Kenley's.

"Not that I'm blamin' her much," she told John when he came over for a few minutes after breakfast to attend to a bit of business at the Treasury office and to see how she had slept. "I'se warrant she wouldn't be any more comfortable visitin' me than I am visitin' her. Do I need to stop another day?"

"Kenley thinks it would be better, though he's lookin' a whole lot more pleased wi' himsel' this mornin' than he was last night. He thinks that showin' them he was ready scared them off. And," John lied easily, "I think it did. But another day and nicht o' caution is maybe best. Surely ye can stand that?'

"Surely, John. And ye're not to be botherin' about me either. I'll manage fine." Bella smiled, then lowered her voice a little. "They're sayin' Mr. Calvert's up at his own beach. Are they goin' up to catch him?"

"MacConnachie says they will—when they've got the time." A sober pause. "I hope Calvert's in his right mind when they do."

"Will he run if he sees them comin'?"

"No' him."

"What'll he do?"

But John shook his head, and with Lali's most carefully bandaged back in mind, said solemnly and with a great deal of conviction—

"Ye never can tell what that man'll do."

Then John went back to his own beach, leaving Bella to occupy her time on the Kenley veranda as best she might.

In the course of the morning, Dr. Allen, the assistant district commissioner, Captain Geddes of the transport department and even MacConnachie of the swollen and aching jaw, managed to find occasion to pass the Kenley bungalow, and, discovering Bella making a half hearted pretense of reading, contributed some of the government's valuable time toward her entertainment.

Bella did not mind. But neither did she seem to get as much amusement as usual out of the several ornately expressed anxieties about her health and welfare generally. And when Ruth Kenley came out to the veranda just as MacConnachie was leaving, Bella said, when the P.W.D. man had passed out of hearing:

"It beats me, Miss Kenley, how ye can let yoursel' blame a man like Mr. Calvert on the word o' a man like him."

"Really?" with a smile that was willing to "put up with" Bella indefinitely if duty insisted upon it.

"He's an awfu' liar, to begin wi'," Bella continued even more frankly. "And I'm no' in the habit o' usin' that word unless I mean just that."

Ruth's brows puckered in sudden disapproval.

"Do you think you have a right to use it at all? What do you know of Mr. MacConnachie—or, in fact, of any man in the government's employ—to justify the use of a word like that?"

If Bella heard the resentment in Ruth's voice, and she would have been very deaf if she hadn't, she paid no attention to it; just smiled a slow smile that said nothing or much according to one's knowledge of Bella.

"Well, I'll admit, Miss Kenley, I don't know much o' anything. But a man is just a man to me, whether he's takin' the government's money for his work, or is earnin' his bite and sup buyin' palm oil or sellin' boots. And one o' the reasons I married John Todd was because he is as little o' a liar as a man can be and still make enough to keep a wife."

Ruth laughed in spite of herself.

*"What an odd reason for——"*

"Wait a meenit—I mean a minute," Bella interrupted steadily. "The Bible says 'All men are liars.' But that's no' what I mean when I make special mention o' MacConnachie. He's the kind o' liar, Miss Kenley, that would be a liar if every other man spoke the truth."

Ruth did not laugh this time.

"Don't you think you had better qualify that, or make yourself more clear?" she asked, doing her best to seem merely judicial and not at all prejudiced.

Bella paused, glanced up and down the path that passed the bungalow, then brought her attention back to Ruth as if she had made up her mind about something or other.

"I shouldna'—I mean should not like to see Mr. Calvert wronged, Miss Kenley."

"Wronged?"

"Aye." A pause and then in a lower voice—

"Could I tell ye somethin' without you necessarily tellin' John—Mr. Todd—I told you?"

Ruth looked puzzled.

"Perhaps—well—that is hardly—what is it?"

And Bella simply and without mincing matters told of MacConnachie's rather too persistent attentions to herself, and just why Calvert had had trouble thrust upon him by the P.W.D. man.

"John would never tell it," Bella explained. "I know fine he wouldn't. He'd find every other way o' helpin' Mr. Calvert but that way. But I was thinkin' that maybe if you could see your way to whisper the wee story in your brother's ear, maybe he'd be willin' to listen to reason."

Ruth's finely chiseled features were set in an expression of ultra-judicial inquiry. She was not a fool by any means. But she did take the service very seriously, and presently she said with a real note of regret:

"I should be sorry to buoy you up with any false hopes, Mrs. Todd. And frankly, I do not think your story, which I shall, of course, hold in strictest confidence, would do a bit of good, or alter the district commissioner's decision in the slightest. I'm terribly sorry."

"But—but ye'll tell him! Ye'll give the man a chance to make his own mind up about it?"

*"Certainly. But——"*

"Thank ye. That's a' I care about. Just to give Mr. Calvert a' the help I can."

"A laudable desire, I'm sure," Ruth drawled and rose, and smiled as a perfect hostess should. "But don't let me interrupt your reading a minute longer. I really must go and have it out with the washman. Terrible creatures, aren't they?"

Bella did not say. She was too busy trying not to shiver.

BIKO still stared through Calvert's office doorway and, every now and then, as the hours crawled stickily through the sizzling heat of the day, Calvert slumped upon the couch in his office, his elbows upon his knees, his chin cupped in his hands, and blearily watched the Ibo's eyes with a growing, owl-like look in his own.

Hour by hour, Calvert's point of view was becoming foggier and foggier as he drifted farther and farther into an alcoholically conceived world of his own. The complexion of some things changed completely or else vanished altogether; his perspective upon others was reduced to little more than a blur.

But to one supreme series of facts he clung with the tenacity of a bulldog, and his grip upon them became more stubborn as one brandy bottle gave way to another.

He knew who Biko was and why he was there, tied up like that. Biko was Akka-Chuku. And being a priest of N'Ri, Biko was calling for help like a witch-doctor. But it was not going to do him any good, because a government launch was going to come along any minute and take him away.

However, if the government launch did not hurry up, Calvert would kick Akka-Chuku and those —— staring eyes of his down-stairs, and allow Kenley to do his own capturing in future.

Why, Calvert asked himself soberly, should he put himself to all this trouble and weariness to save Kenley's face and the government a few hundred rounds of ammunition? What had Kenley and the government done for him? What would they do for him for laying the mysterious Akka-Chuku by the heels?

Calvert grinned sourly.

Kenley would probably tell him it was not in the code to tie any man up by the neck and feet to an office desk. Office desks were never to be used for that purpose. He should have chosen a post; always a post; and Kenley would show him where it said so in the book.

Occasionally, and at everlengthening intervals, Calvert paid Lali a visit. Her identity was clear enough, but her precise significance was becoming more and more confusing, and after a while he began to have some doubt about the propriety of her presence in Ferguson's room.

It would not have been surprizing, from the expression upon her face as she studied Calvert during these periodical visits, if she were not thinking that, since he had evidently decided to allow gin to be a "headman for him" after all, he might have saved her a most ignominious flogging by becoming intoxicated just a few hours earlier.

She made no attempt to effect an heroic escape. Although she was aware that her record in government circles had recently become quite black, she seemed actually to welcome the possible arrival of the D.C.

In her present helpless plight, however, this was not difficult to understand, since Kenley could afford her more protection from Biko's baneful influence than any one. And she was shrewd enough to realize that the flogging she had received at Zatza's hands—if necessity or rumor compelled her to admit such a degrading thing—would be the best kind of sympathy witness in her favor.

Calvert, of course, knew nothing of all this. He knew simply that Biko was Akka-Chuku, and that Kenley was taking a —— of a long time to come and carry him away.

* * *

AND then, shortly before three in the afternoon, a faded blue print-cloth bundle with small shiny black eyes appeared at the mouth of the bush path behind Calvert's Kroo-house. Behind the bundle appeared two men, then two others behind those, then one and one indefinitely until the path vanished around a bend.

One of the men immediately behind Zatza would have been recognized instantly by Calvert, as Oku, the son of Chief Otobo of Allobar. The others, as Oku would have been the first to confess, did not matter. Nevertheless, their number was rather more than fifty, and any one of them knew as much as Oku did about their reason for being there, which was nothing at all.

Even Zatza was in some considerable doubt about it. She knew that Biko had not returned and that her uneasiness on his account, because of her secret fear of Calvert, had suddenly begun to manifest itself in a keen desire to find out what had happened to him. This had increased to a consciousness of the necessity for help; and not just a little help, but as much of it as she could conveniently muster.

She had communicated this necessity whisperingly to Oku who, in spite of the white-flannel coat and swagger stick he affected, was ever spoiling for an excuse to cut up a white man or two. Not that he had ever done it, but his hopes, of late, had been higher than ever.

Thus, with fifty odd warriors at her back, Zatza the Pure had, to all appearances, answered Biko's long and silent call for help; and Calvert, who was sullenly watching the Ibo's eyes at the time, saw the eyelids droop suddenly and the whole body become limp as if every nerve and sinew knew that the need for such wearisome tension was over.

"Hunh!" Calvert grunted. "*Ju-ju* palaver finis', eh? All right. Which place you frien' live, so I go shoot him belly one time?"

Biko did not answer this, either by look or word. The final result, as far as he was concerned, was in the lap of his gods and he seemed perfectly satisfied to leave it there. So Calvert, with another disparaging grunt, went out to the veranda and, picking up his rifle, looked blearily around for something to shoot.

There being nothing visible in front of

the house, he studied the situation from the sides and rear, much to the amazement of Lali, who saw him pass Ferguson's room, a rifle balanced in his hands in a most business like fashion, and a lowering, truculent look upon his face that did not promise happiness to any one who chanced to assume the appearance of a target.

But he paid not the slightest heed to the girl, not even when she called his name, and presently, from a rear window, he caught sight of the vanguard of Zatza's little army emerging swiftly but cautiously from the bush path behind the Kroo-house.

He did not see Zatza or Oku, who were by that time safely out of sight in the shadow of the several outbuildings that crossed Calvert's line of vision, but as the blacks appeared one by one, some slinking in and out of sight in an upright position, others slithering upon their stomachs, no two in succession taking the same direction, he knew in a foggy kind of way that Biko's *ju-ju* had "worked," and that he would have to do something impressive to offset it.

For a moment or two, his bushy eyebrows clouding his eyes with a scowling dark, Calvert watched several more natives, most of them in loin-cloth and all of them carrying machetes or muzzleloaders, emerge from the bush path and disappear in various directions behind the Kroo-house.

"Hunh!"

This was his only audible comment, but from that instant he moved with unfaltering directness, apparently concentrating on a given point. As if he were making for a solitary light that shone mistily in the middle of a rain-thrashed moor, he secured his keys—one of them a master key that opened any padlock on the beach—then went massively out and downstairs to the beach.

Because the house and the kernel store lay between him and any possibility of divulging his movements to Biko's friends who were, of course, approaching from the rear, Calvert did not trouble to seek cover on his way to the oil-yard, which at once declared itself as his objective.

With the rifle trailing in his left hand, he walked up to the oil yard gate with a heavy, judicial kind of calm that would have been amusing if it had not been so serious and sincere. And whatever sentiment or sentiments were in possession of him then, the queer and unbelievable thing he did was undoubtedly typical of the man.

He thrust his hand through a gap in the high board fence that protected the oil yard—a gap especially made for a purpose—and, taking hold of the short cord attached to the tongue of the old ship's bell that hung therein, he solemnly rang six bells.

One-two—three-four—five-six.

Each note was loud and clear enough to be heard all over the beach and indicated to all who cared to hear that the Paller beach, whatever might be the case elsewhere, was inhabited and was still doing business in ship-shape fashion.

Biko heard the ringing of the bell and, perhaps because it was the living relic of a bygone day, reminding him of the first coming of the ships that had ultimately led to the government of the Guns, his limp body became taut again, and he strained at his bonds till the arteries of his forehead and neck stood out like the weals raised by a hippo-hide thong.

Zatza also heard the bell. Her little button eyes blinked in answer to every stroke just as if they were blows. And the sudden fear and distrust she felt in that sharp, breath-taking moment, communicated itself to Oku and to every one of the crawling slithering blacks scattered hither and yon over the back of the beach.

Those who were still in the bush stayed there. The others showed most of the whites of their eyes and paused and waited for further orders. But Zatza, muttering rapidly to herself and keeping her eyes bent upon the ground, had become a mere bundle of bones that, momentarily at least, had severed the unseen lines of communication between herself and the man who writhed impotently on the floor of Calvert's office.

Oku, more dubious of the need or advisability of the adventure even than she was, whispered to her sharply, demanding an explanation of the unexpected and unwarranted ringing of the beach bell, but she made no answer that was in the least intelligible and, having thus hesitated in command of the expedition, immediately lost control of it completely.

For, after the ringing of the bell, came silence; a silence that gave not the least evidence of life; an uncanny quiet that made the bell's six strokes repeat themselves in every dusky ear, over and over again.

One-two—three-four—five-six.

Perhaps Calvert, now crouching low and moving with incredible speed for a man of his size and condition, guessed something of Zatza's sensations as he zigzagged among the casks and shooks and lumber in the oil yard.

His solemn, judicial air had left him. In its place was a sour grin that exaggerated rather than diminished the flitting light of pure savagery in his eyes.

But, when he reached the cooper's shed at the extreme rear of the oil yard, where, from behind a stack of shooks, he enjoyed a slantwise view of that part of the beach that lay between the Kroo-house and the bush, the grin faded slowly and a look of disappointment spread itself all over his expansive features.

There was going to be no fight. His intention to stage a flank attack went a-glimmering in the first second of his rediscovery of the enemy.

He saw Oku standing beside Zatza, who was squatting immovably in the shelter of a rain barrel and Oku was half-turned toward the bush path even then, while he made voluble though low-toned pretense at being dissatisfied with Zatza's apparent disinclination to carry the matter any further.

Zatza, quite obviously, was refusing to argue the point and wanted to be left alone; and beyond these two, several of their followers were already taking the responsibility for retreat upon their own shoulders.

Presently, as a sound not unlike the putter of a gasoline engine struck upon Calvert's ears, Oku glanced quickly to right and left and evidently decided that there was nothing to be gained on a fool's errand of this sort.

Then, hurling a final Ibo obscenity at Zatza's squatting figure, he gave his overcloth a tightening twist, twirled his swagger stick, stuck his straw hat more jauntily on the side of his wooly head and strolled—after the manner of a Sierra Leonese Government clerk—toward the entrance to the bush path.

In another minute, Zatza was alone, staring steadfastly at a spot on the ground just beyond her hunched up knees.

Sullenly watching her from behind his stack of shooks, Calvert waited to see her follow the others into the bush. But Zatza did not stir. Fear of Calvert, suddenly and queerly accentuated by the ringing of the beach bell, had prevented her from going forward, and fear of Biko was now preventing her from going back; and as if she were trying to discover which fear-forged chain was the stronger, she continued to squat beside the rain barrel, looking more like a bundle than ever and a rather pitifully neglected bundle at that.

She did not squat very long, however. After a minute or two she looked up sharply, gave vent to a short, piping squeak of sudden terror, and then, an inch at a time, came slowly to her feet; just as if Calvert's eyes, immediately above her, were dragging her upward against her will.

Behind him she might have seen that the back gate of the oil yard was open, and the small bunch of keys he was returning to the clip of his belt would have explained the rest. But she saw none of these things; only Calvert's narrowed eyes and his grin and his gun and presently, the appalling fact that, in spite of what Lali had had to say the previous evening, he was still the servant of a little gin in a glass.

" 'Lo, Zatza. You come look you frien'?"

Zatza's eyes shifted to the bush in evident search for help, and at the same time, within the folds of the faded print-cloth, a skinny arm stirred in the direction of her waist line.

Calvert laughed. He was enjoying the situation with much more savage glee than he would have done had he been sober. It was nearer to his own present saturnalian level, which was by no means lovely.

"You got knife dere?" he asked, poking the bundle disrespectfully with the muzzle of his rifle. "So-so knife no good. Gun be propah fash'."

Then, with a malicious grin that had the wisdom of the white and black behind it, he asked:

"You want look you frien'? He make *ju-ju* eye foh you long time."

Zatza the Pure whimpered then and crumpled and seemed utterly to give up the ghost.

"I be so-so old woman," she whined and the full number of years descended upon her in a moment. "I no get frien' foh dis place."

But when Calvert, using the rifle as a pointer, indicated the way she should go, Zatza went.

Also, with amazing regard for detail, Calvert returned to the house by way of the oil yard, so that he could re-lock the gate; a little matter to which he attended as punctiliously as John Todd had ever done.

And always Zatza the Pure walked before him, a shriveled little captive, hungrily breathing the precious breath of life, while one claw-like hand feverishly clutched the haft of a knife in case she might have one ever-so-slight chance of using it.

Then, as they marched from the front of the oil yard toward the house, Calvert's rather sodden amusement gave way to a scowl as his glance was suddenly arrested by the presence of a white man on his veranda.

The white man was talking to Lali who had one arm wrapped around a veranda upright as if she needed its support.

The phenomenon encouraged Calvert to look a little farther, and he became aware of a launch that crowded his gig-wharf to capacity.

"Hunh!" poking Zatza in the back with the rifle. "Just like a policeman. Always shows up when the shooting's all over."

However, the man on the veranda was not Walter Kenley. He was a man with a swollen and aching jaw and his name was MacConnachie.

Kenley was in Calvert's office, cutting Biko free with a scissors.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### THE LAST LAUGH

LALI also had heard the ringing of the beach bell. And it had brought her out to the veranda, by slow and laborious stages, to find out what it was all about. So she had, as fearfully and penitently as she had thought advisable, allowed Kenley and MacConnachie to find her there, this, more particularly since Calvert had evidently gone altogether mad.

She did not, however, have very much to say—little more than to indicate that she was too sick to run away—and her inclination was to say still less when she saw Calvert herding Zatza the Pure from the oil yard toward the stairs. She gaped at the absurd looking little procession in a stupefied amaze that did not have any breath for words; and was glad to observe that MacConnachie, who was not in a good humor, was evidently similarly impressed.

He walked away from her abruptly toward the top of the stairs, and remained there waiting for Calvert and his captive to come up to him.

Calvert's greeting, however, when he did reach the top step, was most perfunctory. He recognized MacConnachie but he had but the mistiest recollection of having struck him; and besides, he had more important business in hand in any case.

He wanted to show Biko how much his *ju-ju* had worked; and he was anticipating a rather nasty amount of amusement from seeing Biko squirm.

So he drove Zatza straight ahead, flinging off MacConnachie's detaining hand with disrespectful ease, and passed on to his office in time to see Biko rising to his feet rubbing his wrists and ankles and neck, while Kenley put the scissors back on Calvert's desk where he had found them.

Calvert did not hear the comparatively mild oath of ill-temper MacConnachie gave vent to, or see Zatza's little button eyes trying to understand the significance of the strips of linen that strewed the floor as she made a pretense of being a perfect stranger to Biko.

He scarcely saw Kenley who, standing a scant two feet away from the Ibo, was regarding Zatza and Calvert alternately as if he could not make up his mind which was the most surprizing.

In those first few seconds, Calvert saw only Akka-Chuku—on his feet and free!

Naturally, upon a par with every one else, Calvert stared; then suddenly became ugly and pugnacious until he was aware of the rifle in his hand. After that, he carelessly spread his legs, rested one hand on the door jamb and, thus filling the doorway to the exclusion of MacConnachie, he had his laugh anyway.

"I bring your frien'," he told Biko simply. "She no fit to come plenty quick, so I go get gun and bring um propah. Be all ri'?"

Biko had stopped rubbing his wrists and ankles and he was looking straight into the teeth of Calvert's grin, but he did not seem to have the least idea of what Calvert meant. And when he glanced at Zatza it was only as one would glance at a rather odd piece of furniture that had just been brought in. Almost immediately he had turned to Kenley.

"I no *savez* what's matter Mas' Calvert make palaver foh me," he complained respectfully. "All same, he say he want look me, so we go talk li'l bit, I come foh dis place. And he go flog me and tie me up all same I be so-so t'ief. Maybe so he gin palaver. I no *savez*."

This sounded reasonable to Kenley, particularly since it was quite plain that Calvert and the brandy bottle had become most intimately acquainted again. But before he considered Biko's case, he thought he would like to have Lali and Zatza explained to him because Calvert, drunk or sober, had apparently brought about the impossible in these so separate directions.

"Where did you get her?" he asked sharply, and indicated Zatza with a gesture.

Calvert did not answer at once. He regarded Kenley for quite a while as if he were trying to decide whether he should allow himself to be snapped at like that. Then he answered briefly—

"At the back of the beach."

"What was she doing there?"

"Coming to cut him free. But you've saved her the trouble."

He jerked his head toward Biko with that air of super-mysteriousness which certain inebriated types so thoroughly enjoy, and asked almost in a whisper—

"Do you know who he is?"

"Never mind that now," Kenley said, determined to stick to one prisoner at a time. "How did you happen to know Zatza was coming to set him free?"

Calvert grunted disparagingly, scowled at Zatza and Biko, and then back at Kenley.

"*Ju-ju* stuff," he answered indifferently. "You wouldn't understand it if I told you. But—" with another super-mysterious jerk of the head in Biko's direction—"do you know who *he* is?"

Kenley's mouth tightened. It was difficult at times to remember that Calvert was intoxicated. He was so unpleasantly definite about some things.

"We'll come to that later," the D. C. persisted, "and we'll take whatever you say about Zatza for granted, whether we understand it or not. But Lali—what's wrong with her? She doesn't seem to be able to walk."

"Lali?" Calvert had to think this over. "Lali?"

He did not remember just how Lali happened to be in Ferguson's room, unless, of course, but Ferguson's business was his own and none of Kenley's.

"Lali—eh? I don't know. Don't remember. Something wrong with her back."

He shook his head to clear away some of the fog, then dismissed the whole business with a gesture.

"Doesn't matter. If you want her, take her away. But do you know who *he* is?"

Calvert's left hand swept largely in Biko's direction, and he repeated challengingly—

"Do you?"

"Not particularly. He tells me that Talbot rather fancies him for a house-boy. What's your notion?"

Calvert paused. He liked the dramatic effect of it. Then with an absurdly true conception of real drama, he announced in the most casual fashion—

"Akka-Chuku."

A rather loud and unpleasant laugh sounded immediately behind him. But he did not turn his head. He was too busy watching Kenley, who was doing his best not to echo MacConnachie's laughter.

"That's fine," Kenley said at last. "I assume that is why you had him tied up so tightly? I'll confess I didn't quite understand it at first."

Calvert's glance shifted to Biko, then came back to Kenley sourly.

"Don't believe it, eh?"

"Of course, I do."

"And you're going to let him stay loose—like that?"

"Oh—er—no. We'll tie him up all right. On the launch. Better get your sun-helmet and come along and take care of him. See that he doesn't get away, you know?"

Calvert paused a few seconds, his eyes roving between Kenley and Biko. Then he stepped out of the doorway, lumbered toward the couch, and sat down, resting his rifle across his knees.

"Get to —— out of here."

THIS was not mere vulgar profanity. It was the sourest kind of indignation; a plain statement of fact that was intended to be taken literally; and probably would be if they allowed Biko to get away.

Kenley, however, did not lose his temper, or make any show of asserting his authority. He leaned against the desk, shot an interpretive glance at MacConnachie, who now occupied Calvert's place in the doorway, and said quietly:

"That's all right. If you'll wait till

MacConnachie finds a bit of rope on the launch, we'll tie this chap up again. Zatza, too. I don't think that Lali will need any."

And he nodded to MacConnachie who immediately departed, wearing as broad a grin as his aching jaw would allow.

"Hunh!"

Calvert intended this to mean that the matter no longer interested him; not even the fact that MacConnachie's departure had left the door altogether unguarded. He sat for a while balancing the rifle on his knees and scowled disgustedly at the floor, while Kenley proceeded to give all of his attention to Zatza, about whom there could be no mistake whatever.

He did not believe she had come to the Paller beach to rescue Biko. Instead, he was convinced that, knowing Lali was there in an apparently helpless condition, she had come to pay the girl a visit, the probably unpleasant result of which, Calvert would have discovered when he found the body; that is, if he or any one ever did. But why Zatza should attempt this thing in broad daylight——

"What you do foh dis place?" he asked her abruptly.

"I no *savez* not'ing," Zatza whined plaintively. "I be so-so old, old woman."

"What you do foh his beach?"

"I t'ink so, maybe I go catch li'l bit dash all same Mas' Calvert be frien' foh Mas' Todd."

"Bash, bunkum! You *savez* Lali live foh dis beach and——"

Perhaps Kenley did see the streak of bronze lightning that suddenly flashed through Calvert's office doorway and passed out of sight over the veranda rail, ignoring the stairs completely.

But certainly he saw no more than a streak, and when he followed it toward the rail, to the unhappy accompaniment of Calvert's laughter, there was nothing left to shoot at but the merest glimpse of Biko's heels disappearing around the corner of the house toward the bush.

And when Kenley turned toward the stairs with some vague notion of pursuit in his head, he found Zatza a scant foot away from him—between him and the stairs—and one scrawny hand, clutching a broad bladed knife, was waving a grotesque defense of Biko's escape.

Instinctively Kenley stepped back a pace, and with a kind of subconscious fascination watched the sunken line of her mouth appear and disappear as she hurled Ibo monosyllables at him and indicated generally that, until Biko was safely away, she was going to have no respect whatever for district commissioners or any one else.

She made no attempt to escape on her own account. Neither did she do more than flourish the threat of injury to Kenley's person. And when the D. C.'s revolver finally commanded her to drop the knife, she dropped it obediently enough and went peaceably back to the office, leaving Kenley to tug the knife's point out of the floor.

She knew that by that time Biko was in no further danger of the white man or his guns.

MacConnachie, on the launch, had received but the vaguest impression of Biko's flight, principally when the latter had picked himself up after his leap over the veranda rail. But the P. W. D. man, deciding that there was something wrong somewhere, was now coming up from the gig-wharf at a trot.

Kenley, however, gave no thought to MacConnachie. He attended to the detail of taking possession of Zatza's knife in a leisurely and thoughtful fashion, and when he straightened, his eyes chanced to light on a red and blue-black lizard that was sunning itself and waiting for flies on the oil-cask runway below.

He was not in the least interested in the lizard or the runway, but Calvert was still laughing and making no secret of it, and the sound of that laughter was by no means pleasant to Kenley's ear, particularly since Calvert was drunk and he, Kenley, was, as always, perfectly sober.

So he found the lizard absorbing for a while and stood watching it, chewing his lip reflectively and trying to believe it was just possible that Biko had run away because he had suddenly grown afraid of becoming involved——

But that did not hold water very well. Zatza's defence of the stairs had been too fervent a thing to leave much doubt about her reason for coming to Calvert's beach in broad daylight. And if Biko's rescue were worth a risk of that dimension; if he were so dear a friend of Zatza's and Otobo's and the rest, while his ostensible purpose in life was the performance of odd jobs about the barracks!

"WHAT'S the trouble?"

Kenley became aware of MacConnachie's up-turned face taking the place of the lizard which had scurried away at the P. W. D. man's approach.

"You won't need the rope," Kenley said simply.

"Did he slope?"

Kenley smiled, which was by no means an easy thing to do.

"I hardly saw him go," he admitted quietly, and scarcely paid any heed to the look of consternation that spread itself all over MacConnachie's face. "Just a minute."

Abruptly, Kenley shifted his attention to Lali who had been watching him from the other end of the veranda, fearful of the moment when he would look toward her just like that. She still had one arm wrapped around a veranda upright and now she clung to it even more tightly as Kenley strolled deliberately toward her.

She, too, could hear Calvert laughing, and it was not difficult to visualize him drinking with much gusto between laughs. Apparently the escape of Biko amused him much more than it seemed to be amusing any one else; particularly Kenley. And when the D. C. came and stood before her and fastened his eye uncompromisingly upon her, Lali looked demurely down at her little naked feet and made ready to lie like a shop thief.

She knew Biko was free, and that Calvert had forgotten, for the time being at least, everything she had told him; and with Lali, as with the majority of natives, the present was all that mattered.

"You *savez* Biko?" Kenley asked shortly as MacConnachie came thoughtfully up the short flight of stairs.

"I no *savez* him, sah."

"Which place he come?"

"I no *savez*, sah. Be so I t'ink he work foh gov'ment beach, dat's all."

Kenley winced at this, but continued—

"What thing you do foh dis beach?"

At once Lali looked up indignantly.

"Some man go cut my back, sah, them time I sleep foh canoe. I sick too much, sah, foh dat thing! And all same I want catch white man med'cine, sah, Mas' Calvert give me dem med'cine, so I go be allri' li'l bit."

"Calvert!"

"Yessah. Them time he no catch gin foh him head, sah."

"Oh," briefly; and Kenley nodded slowly several times and began chewing his lip again. Then, disbelieving Lali's story in its entirety, he asked abruptly—

"Which man cut your back?"

"I think so be Zatza, sah," Lali said simply.

"Zatza?" Kenley stared at the audacity of the accusation. "You want me tell all man Zatza flog you?"

"I no talk so, sah," Lali protested indignantly. "No man fit to flog me, all same I *savez* he do um. Be *ju-ju* palaver."

Kenley smiled a rather tired smile. This was just a little too involved for his present frame of mind, and he had no wish to delve deeper into the matter there or then.

"You no *savez* Biko?" he persisted merely to close the conversation.

"No, sah."

"He be Zatza frien'?"

"I no *savez* Zatza frien', sah."

Kenley turned to walk slowly back to Calvert's office, in the doorway of which MacConnachie now lingered as if he were somewhat dubious about going in. Then the D. C. looked just a little impatiently back at Lali and asked—

"You fit to walk foh launch?"

"Li'l bit, sah. Slow—slow. My back be sick too much, sah."

"All right."

Then, calling quietly to MacConnachie:

"Here is a job for you, Mac. An injured lady in need of a lift. Have an orderly or some one take her down to the launch, will you?"

"Surely."

And MacConnachie seemed to be glad of the opportunity to do something that would take him away from the sight, as well as the sound of Calvert's disagreeably long-lived laughter.

For, even then, neither Kenley nor MacConnachie, had any doubt about the fact that it was a sound that would ultimately travel the length and breadth of the Nigerias.

And Calvert would not have to say a word about it. The story of Biko's capture and escape, as such stories had an uncanny trick of doing, would filter through to the white traders by native channels, and probably before that day was done; not one story, but a dozen, all of them garbled in an effort to be funnier and more worthy of laughter than the rest.

And if Biko actually did prove to be Akka-Chuku——

Kenley reentered Calvert's office and found the trader standing in the middle of the floor, his rifle still in his hand, the muzzle of it pointing directly at Zatza who was cowering in a corner to the right of the door. Evidently Calvert was taking most careful precautions that she would not escape.

" 'Lo, Kenley. Lost him, eh? Thought you would." A pause. "Have a drink?"

"No, thanks. Time to get back down-river now. Want to come along?"

Calvert lowered the muzzle of the rifle, and under clouded brows, looked at the D. C. in sour suspicion.

"What for?"

"I think you'd better. I'd like you to sober up so that I can have a talk with you, and I know you'll never do it here."

"Hunh."

"I think I'd get drunk myself if I kept myself buried the way you do."

Calvert did not even grunt at this. Vaguely he was thinking that Kenley was either tricking him back to the government beach, or was proving himself a man of unusual courage to want to have "a long talk" with any one who had as much reason to laugh at him as he had.

And though the details were misty or missing altogether, Calvert remembered his short sojourn on the government beach and knew that he did not want to go back there.

"What do you want to talk to me about?" he asked cautiously.

"The whole business. Any man who can bring in Zatza and Lali and our departed friend in one morning, and get drunk and still hang on to them, is worth talking to—or rather listening to. Go ahead and get your sun-helmet and anything else you want and come along."

As Calvert still and for obvious reasons hesitated, Kenley added while he smiled with a show of real and unmistakable courage:

"But just as you please. You're perfectly well able to take care of yourself. In fact—" with a short laugh that must have hurt not a little—"I'm seriously thinking of moving the government beach up here!"

Calvert's slow grin was the slowest thing Kenley had possibly ever waited for. But it came finally and with it, something in the sudden depths of the man came to the surface and floated in his eyes so that, for a second or two, Kenley could see it quite plainly; something of startled admiration mingled with an apology.

"All right," gruffly. "Wait till I get my sun-helmet."

## CHAPTER XIX

### INVESTIGATION

THE journey down river to the government beach was an undertaking of few words, and most of these were Zatza's. Apparently she did not care for the privilege of traveling in the same launch as Lali who, by virtue of the fact that she was headed for the hospital instead of the jail, was being treated accordingly.

All the way to the government wharf, Zatza, under the eye of a somewhat dubious Hausa orderly, continued to keep Lali informed of the unprintable character of her ancestry and of the probable unsightly state of her back; all of this, of course, in Ibo, and most of it unintelligible to every one but Calvert and Lali herself.

Lali paid no attention to it. And Calvert, with his elbows on his knees and his head between his hands, seemed to be trying to decide whether he liked the company he had chosen to keep.

Somewhere in the fog that was about him was the elusive recollection of a promise he had made; a promise that had something to do with remaining on his own beach until "—— broke loose." Whether the promise had been made to any one in particular or simply to himself, he could not remember, but it seemed to him just then, to be a perfectly good promise and one that ought, somehow or other, to be kept.

Instead he was going back to the government beach simply because Kenley had said——

Calvert had no difficulty in understanding anything that was said to him at the time it was said or in carrying shrewdly on his own share of the conversation; but a few minutes later, the whole incident became a blur that would require repetition to become coherent to him.

However, in this instance, he laboriously recollected that it was the D. C.'s intention to move the government beach alongside Paller's for safety's sake.

This startling decision on Kenley's part did not startle Calvert. Neither did it flatter him. He simply did not want the government beach to move next door to him, and if they would get more Hausa men into the army there would be no necessity for it; at least, not so much. Certainly he had neither the time nor the inclination to see to it that the government beach people got to bed safely every night.

In fact, he considered it a profane imposition and he was trying to make up his mind to tell Kenley so when the frothy mutterings that emanated from his puffy lips sputtered off into a gently rocking silence that was concluded on the deck of the launch's little cabin.

Kenley, just a little tight of lip, went to Calvert's assistance at once. As he stood over the trader's huddled bulk, waiting for MacConnachie to come and help him, the expression upon his lean, tropical face belied his reputation. There was pity in Kenley's eyes and a pardonable envy too; and his head jerked upward with a nasty snap when MacConnachie, using an aching jaw to say it with, advised gruffly:

"Oh, leave him there. He'll never know the difference. He's out cold now."

The few seconds of silence that followed were not enjoyed by the P. W. D. man. He had not suspected that Kenley could look as unpleasant as he did then.

"Oh, all right," with a rather sallow and unfinished grin. "But he's no lightweight, you know."

However, with a herculean effort, they picked Calvert up and laid him on the seat, and Kenley sat at his head to try to see to it that he did not roll off. Presently MacConnachie, when he had recovered his breath and returned to his own seat on the opposite side of the cabin, asked skeptically:

"Why so careful? You don't think there's a chance in the world of him keeping his mouth shut simply because we're nice to him?"

A quick, hurt light leaped into Kenley's eyes, then just as quickly went out. He studied his boots for a little while and more securely tied one of the laces with orderly care. Then, but not in any hurry, he looked up.

"Biko, you mean? I shall have to report that."

"But you're not sure that Biko fellow was——"

"Calvert said so," Kenley interrupted mildly, rubbing his perspiring palms and smiling in a dry and not at all mirthful fashion, as he remembered what John Todd had had to say about Norman Daniel Calvert in his office the night before. "And I think it would be advisable to believe anything Calvert says after this—drunk or sober."

THE launch sidled alongside the government wharf under the muzzle of the solitary machine-gun shortly after five o'clock. Thus Calvert was rather more than an hour late for his four o'clock appointment at the Kenley bungalow, which was one of the things he just mistily remembered, without however, having any precise information upon the subject of whether it was four o'clock of that day, or some day the following week or month.

In any event, he was much too sleepy to keep any appointment just then, and though he walked without assistance to a bed on the second floor of the building known as the annex, this important detail meant nothing to him until several hours later.

And in the mean time, since the launch had gone puttering up river in midafternoon, Bella Todd had been sitting on the Kenley bungalow veranda anxiously wondering if it would come puttering back with Calvert.

She did not know whether Ruth had told her brother the little story she, Bella, had hoped would change the D. C.'s mind, and she did not inquire. If the worst came to the worst, she would go to Kenley herself.

But she still hoped for much from Calvert, and she thought there was as much likelihood of the launch bringing him back as there was of him appearing at the bungalow for four o'clock tea. For, to her, Calvert had developed into a storm center; a pivot of excitement more potent than Akka-Chuku; a kind of bacchanalian god that generated the sort of trouble that laughed.

He could talk Ibo like a native, which made him mysterious; had frightened Zatza out of her wits, which made him a friend; had knocked MacConnachie out with a single punch, which made him admirable, and had given the D. C. the slip and returned to his own beach, which made him enviable. Bella wished she could do it.

So for the greater part of that day, Bella had looked toward Calvert as toward an oasis, or a vaudeville performance, or market day at Abertinny; something, at any rate, that would lighten the weight of the hours and very possibly provide something tangible to get excited about.

Thus, she was still seated on the bungalow veranda when the launch came back. And presently, on the far side of the beach, she saw a native policeman running toward the hospital. Then, with a hospital orderly, she saw him running back to the launch with a stretcher.

But before she could make up her mind what to think of this, she saw, coming up the path that ran past the bungalow, MacConnachie and two native police, urging a prisoner along at a faster gait than the prisoner evidently wanted to travel. And Bella would not believe who that prisoner was until there could be no possible mistake about it.

"Zatza!" she whispered unbelievingly. "Zatza!"

Then she turned her head and called excitedly into the living room:

"They've got Zatza, Miss Kenley! Zatza! What do ye think o' that? And they're bringing somebody up from the launch on a stretcher."

This last brought Ruth out to the veranda; but quietly and without any visible excitement.

"Some one in a—oh, yes—I see."

A short, leaden pause; then calmly:

"A native, I think. That's Walter and Captain Talbot, isn't it, going toward the annex with—who is that big man between them? He looks familiar, but——"

"Calvert!" gaspingly. "It's Mr. Calvert! They've got him after a'! And I'll warrant he's changed his suit!"

Bella laughed in spite of her acute disappointment.

"Dod! Every time that man puts on a clean suit o' claes—I mean clothes—he flings sparks around him like a whirligig."

Ruth did not even smile.

"Of course they caught him. That's why they went up-river."

Then, with a short laugh—

"He's rather late for tea, isn't he?"

"Tea?"

Bella repeated the word absently with her eyes upon Zatza who was then going past. Then her glance shifted to MacConnachie who was touching his helmet and smiling. So she smiled in polite acknowledgment, but did not ask any of the questions he expected her to ask.

"I'm thinkin' Mr. Calvert is no' much o' a tea drinker, Miss Kenley. And it looks to me, the way Captain Talbot, and your brother are stickin' so close to him, that he's —och, well, poor man, is no' a sickness easily gotten rid o'."

"Sickness!"

"Aye, and a sore sickness, too, that's no particular who it takes hold o'—the best and the worst o' them. But I've got a notion that there's more gumption in Mr. Calvert's wee finger, drunk, than in lots o' sober men's whole bodies."

Ruth did not argue the point, but it was plain that her attitude toward Calvert, no matter how well he could paint, had not altered in the slightest. If he were sick, he should go to the hospital or go home; somewhere, at any rate, where he would not make a nuisance of himself and impede the wheels of governmental progress.

Unlike Bella, Ruth did not have much experience with drunk men or fools. Most of the men she had known were in the service.

"I wonder how they got him so easy?" Bella queried, after a minute or two. "I'll warrant he was sleepin'!"

Ruth bit her lip, then smiled quickly and at once changed the subject to vegetables, which was safer. But Bella was not interested just then. She had seen Calvert and his escort disappear into the annex, and was now centering her whole attention on the stretcher that was nearing the hospital.

"I wonder who they've got on that stretcher?" she asked, absently following Ruth to the little garden gate that permitted entrance to privileged characters only. "Would it be terrible if I went across to the hospital to ask?

"Not very," patiently and secretly hoping she would. "I don't think Dr. Allen would mind, not unless the case is a nasty one."

"Oh, I wouldn't go into the ward. Just to his wee office or whatever ye ca'—I mean call—that place he makes up pills and powders and things. Can I go?"

"Of course, child! There isn't any reason——"

"Thank ye. I'll no' be long."

BELLA'S inclination to race across the government beach lawn to the hospital had to be curbed to a walk that would be in keeping with her wifehood and particularly with the name of Mrs. John Todd.

She knew that John would not approve of her visiting the hospital upon any pretext, principally because John knew Dr. Allen would. And when she had asked Ruth whether it would be all right for her to go there, she had not been asking Ruth so much as she had been preparing a valid excuse to John.

For if Miss Kenley, who was so terrible proud and so fond of her fine manners, did not think it was out of place to visit the hospital once in a while, surely John could not expect his wife to be any more circumspect than Ruth Kenley. The thing was not reasonable.

So Bella walked across the broad government lawn without a thought apparently for the eyes of the world, which consisted principally of a scant few colored clerks, some scattered members of the native constabulary and a vague white man or two whose faces were slightly familiar, but whose names were mixed or altogether unknown.

The stretcher containing Lali had passed into the little hospital some time before Bella reached it, and Dr. Allen was already busy with an examination of his new patient when Bella stepped up to the open door of the doctor's office and inquiringly looked in.

A hospital clerk of Sierra-Leonese extraction garbed in spotless white and boasting what he hoped was a Cambridge accent, was the sole occupant of the office, and at sight of such unexpected company, his accent became a matter of graver doubt than usual.

But after several false starts he managed to convey to Bella the information that the doctor was busy—"pro tem, Mrs. Todd, merely pro tem—" with a patient who had just been brought in, but that if she cared to wait, he would communicate with Dr. Allen.

"No, I'll not bother him the now," Bella said with a rather hurried air of matronly reserve. "I was just passin' and I saw the stretcher carried up from the launch—it did come from the launch, didn't it?"

"Yes, Mrs. Todd."

"A native."

"Yes, Mrs. Todd. A woman, I should venture to asseverate without fear of contradiction, of infamous and irreparable reputation."

The clerk, including his accent and manner, felt better after this.

"Eh? I mean—a woman did ye say?"

"Yes, Mrs. Todd. One of those who are imin—im—*inim*ical, Mrs. Todd, to all who are intimately and inseparably concerned with the inviolable integrity and sacredly invested administration of His Britannic Majesty's Government."

Bella blinked at this, then desperately tried a short cut.

"What's her name?"

The clerk paused. The question did not give him as much of an opportunity as he would have liked. But he did what he could with it.

"Her name, Mrs. Todd, in the purlieus, or perhaps I should say the vicinage of the trading beaches——"

And there he stopped, as if some one had clapped a hand over his mouth.

For the first time since Bella had come in, he appreciated the full significance of Bella's identity, particularly with the name of Lali on the tip of his tongue. Until this moment he had been too busy with his vocabulary to think of anything else.

But now, and suddenly, he became embarrassed, and being the kind of fool he was, had his own idea of the best way to avoid an indelicate subject; indelicate as he supposed it must be to Bella. Since every one else in Allobar knew of the tale Lali had told, he assumed Bella knew it too.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Todd. I should esteem it an inestimable favah if you would relieve me of the necessity of inflicting upon you the inevitable anguish which you will undoubtedly experience upon the mere illusion to this unscrupulous woman's name."

"What do ye mean, man? What's a' these words about? Are ye daft? All I am askin' ye is her name—her name! What folk call her. That'll no' hurt me."

The clerk tried to look past Bella, but, somehow or other, could not manage it. Then he tried some more words but tripped over most of them and, still floundering verbally, concluded desperately:

"I have no wish—I mean, I am merely the unfortunate instrument—that is, if the —er—the woman's name occasions you embarrassment, Mrs. Todd, please understand that I——"

"Och, man, dinna blether so much. Who is she?"

And the name came in a far-off pig-like squeak.

"Lali."

"Lali!"

BELLA *was* surprized. There was no doubt about this. But the tears of mortification the clerk had expected, or the possible sudden rush into the ward to mutilate Lali beyond repair, did not materialize. Instead, when Bella had somewhat recovered from her surprize, she stood looking at the clerk for a full minute or more, trying to understand why he should have thought the mention of Lali's name would hurt and embarrass her.

What had Lali done to make John so angry? And why should this necessarily embarrass his wife? And that a windbag of a government clerk should know more about John's mysterious anger against Lali than she did! It was unthinkable!

But, suppressing her indignation as best she could, Bella did not think it would be dignified or right to question the clerk, particularly since she would not be likely to understand the half of what he said in any case.

So, as politely as she could, under the circumstances, she merely thanked him for the information he had given her, said she would not wait for Dr. Allen, and somewhat abruptly left the office.

But she had no desire to race across the lawn on the way back to the Kenley bungalow. There was a nasty little cloud over her eyes and a small but decisive furrow between them; and every now and then, her glance moved interrogatively toward the annex into which Calvert—the answer to all conundrums—had disappeared.

## CHAPTER XX

### SILENCE

DINNER at the Kenley's was a silent meal that evening.

Although the intrusion of Bella had driven the D.C. back to his old quarters above his office in the executive building, Ruth insisted upon him having his meals under her supervision as usual. And as he had no secrets from Ruth that remained secrets for any length of time, Bella had observed brother and sister in strictly confidential conversation, not long after Kenley had reached the bungalow.

Bella could not, of course, hear anything that was said. But she was quick to observe that though Ruth smiled and tried, with rather too visible desperation, to make light of whatever it was Kenley had told her, it was obvious that his story had taken no small percentage of the spring out of her step and had put into her eyes a queer, haunted and hunted expression, and a look of apology that seemed to resent having had to be born.

Consequently, although it was Bella's first dinner at the Kenley table, it was not an occasion that was in the least likely to convince her that the barrier between trade and the Service was in any danger of being removed.

Course by course, in spite of jerky waves of hospitable cheerfulness that lifted, sometimes to an exaggerated height, then sank to a correspondingly cheerless depth, Bella began to feel—almost see—the barrier rising higher and higher every minute.

It was not easy, of course, for Ruth to swallow the tale of Biko's escape, which would probably be funny enough even to certain branches of the service, and would undoubtedly be uproariously funny on the trading beaches. And that even the taking of Zatza and Lali, women though they were, should fall entirely to the credit of a trader who had not had the decency to remain sober long enough to keep an afternoon tea engagement with her——

Thinking along lines of this sort, though the evening was stifling hot, left Ruth with a mean mental temperature of something just above freezing. As Bella was the representative of trade by marriage, if not by heredity, she inevitably came within the radius of the chilly optic blasts that, mostly subconsciously, blew from the other side of the table.

Yet Ruth was not entirely unaware of her transgressions against the sacred laws of hospitality. Neither was Kenley. But the more they tried to lift that dinner to a normal level, the lower it seemed to fall after each attempt, until, by the time the dessert was reached, Bella had definitely made up her mind to ask John to take her back with him when he came over to see her later in the evening.

Another dinner like that and she would

be flinging the Bartlett pears or the greengages, or whatever the usual canned dessert was, at the steward who served them.

"Dod! What folk to eat wi'!" Bella told John half an hour later when they had been left alone for a little while in a dark corner of the veranda she had taken a liking to. "Dinner's no' a meal wi' them. It's a—a Commandment. As cold as a beadle's stare on a Sunday morning."

"Wheest!" John cautioned and condemned. "Ye're not to criticize folk your stoppin' wi', Bella. It's no' right."

Bella appreciated the justice of this, and, having other more pressing matters upon her mind in any case, said no more about it. After they had sat in one of their habitual silences for several minutes, she asked, apparently without guile—

"Ye know, of course, that they've caught Zatza and put her in jail."

"Aye. Calvert got her."

"Calvert!"

"Wheest!"

John looked carefully about him to be sure neither of the Kenleys was within hearing distance, then lowered his voice to a still more cautious level.

"There's a queer story runnin' about the beaches on the other side o' the river—twa 'r three stories, in fact—and if they are only half true—dod! What a peety that man Calvert can't keep away from the drink!"

This laudable desire for Calvert's reformation was accompanied, oddly enough, by a kind of distant chuckle that Bella sensed rather than heard. And as John did not chuckle often, Bella immediately asked:

"What do ye mean, John? What are they sayin' about him now?"

So John, according to the stories he had heard, told her of the capture and escape of Biko, who was no longer being called by that name in native circles, but whisperingly by the flesh-chilling name of Akka-Chuku.

These stories had come to John, as they had come to every trading agent on the river, by way of the mysterious yet simple enough underground channels of trade. One of them had come to him from one of his market runners, whose business it was to keep him informed of the state of the native markets and to impart any other news that might be of value or interest to him.

Another, and somewhat more ornate version of the same story had reached him through his carpenter, who was not an Accra-man, as trading-beach carpenters usually were, but an Ibo who wore trousers and was a kind of central telegraph office, in constant receipt of all sorts of miscellaneous information, most of which was of no consequence but which occasionally developed a bombshell.

How this particular story had sprung into being, since all of the actors concerned in it were either compulsorily silent or not in the least likely to make the facts known, John Todd—nor any other trader for that matter—made any effort to discover or explain.

This, as John had learned from experience, was a waste of time. No white man who had listened for any length of time to the mysterious, whispering voices of the bush, bothered to question the how or the why of them. He simply listened and made the most of what he heard. Some whisperings traveled faster than others; some were louder, some softer and some less credible. But their source——

"Ye—ye mean to say that Calvert——"

"Wheesht!" John cautioned Bella again. "I'm thinkin' Kenley'll be feelin' bad enough about it, without catchin' us talkin' about it behind his back, and on his own veranda."

Bella did not say anything for several more minutes. She was looking toward the annex again and gaping a little.

"So that's why they were so feared to speak like, at the dinner table!" she whispered after a while. "Dod! And no wonder!" A short pause, and glancing toward the annex again. "But what made him come back wi' Kenley, then?"

"Who?"

"Calvert. Surely the D.C. wouldna be such a fool as to *arrest* him for hittin' MacConnachie, or try to put him out o' the country—not after a thing like that?"

John did not say anything to this. He remembered Calvert's "Here, drunk or sober" speech quite vividly, and he was somewhat at a loss to understand his desertion from that attitude, particularly since, as Bella affirmed, Calvert had arrived on the government beach the worse of liquor.

Calvert drunk was much more difficult as a rule than Calvert sober.

And while John was thinking this over, Bella decided to change her mind about leaving the government beach, even though the necessity for remaining seemed to be diminishing—as far as she could see—every minute.

With one eye on the annex and the other on the solitary light in the little hospital, she was at some pains to realize that the stories John had heard had made no mention of Lali.

"Did ye hear that they got Lali, too?" she asked simply, watching John's face, to all appearances, no more intently than usual, and hoping Ruth Kenley, who was now audibly stirring about the living room, would not interrupt them yet a while.

"Aye—oh, yes—her," John answered, and looked instinctively toward the hospital, almost as if he were afraid Lali could hear him. "They're sayin' Zatza flogged her and cut her back wi' a knife."

"Zatza! Zatza did that!"

"So they're sayin'," John repeated nervously and wished Miss Kenley would hurry up and come out. "Aye. They're sayin' that about Zatza. So—well—ye'll not to be bothered wi' her again."

John said this as if he were making a concession that was a credit to his sense of justice.

"Zatza, ye mean?"

"Aye. Who else?" A heavy pause. "Ye—ye're not lookin' as glad as I thought ye'd be."

Bella's expression was cautiously rebellious. She was thinking of the hospital clerk who knew more about John's affairs than she did, and her indignation made her reckless; but not too much so.

"If ye can get Zatza out o' jail," she said simply, "I'll not mind her sniffin' at my elbow."

John was not sure what he should make of this. The thought that Bella might possibly be indulging in a little sarcasm at his expense was preposterous, so he was forced to conclude that she meant it.

"No—ye needn't be feared," he answered. "We'll leave her where she is. Aye! that'll be best."

"Thank ye, John," simply. "I'll admit I wouldna feel any too comfortable havin' her about me if she's in the habit o' slashin' at folks backs wi' a knife. What, think ye, made her do that to Lali? I thought Lali was one o' the rebels hersel'?"

"Aye, so she is—so she is," John affirmed, and wondered what could be keeping Miss Kenley so long. "But Zatza did not like her any more than she liked Zatza. And womenfolk like that are no' canny when they take a dislike to a body. No, I'll warrant they're no' canny."

John said this with conviction, and Bella sensed that most of his conviction had Lali in mind rather than Zatza. So, after a another minute or so, when a vaguely recognizable white man who looked like Dilby of Marsden's had passed on his way to the barracks, Bella asked in all simplicity—

"Ye don't like Lali, do ye John?"

"Her!" The "r" rolled rather haltingly. "Och, it's nothing. I never think about her one way or the other."

"No?"

"No' a bit. What—what would I be thinkin' o' a black lassie like her for? Tut, Bella! It's not right o' ye to think o' things like that."

"Like what, John?" quietly.

"What ye said."

"What did I say?"

"About that Lali wumman."

"What did I say about her, John?"

"That I—that she—tut wumman, wi' your questions! I'll not bide them!"

"Wheesht!" whisperingly. "It'll no' do for us to quarrel on Miss Kenley's veranda."

* * *

JOHN knew this and said nothing in rebuttal; not immediately. But his brows were clouded with impatience with himself as well as with Bella, and his eyes showed—or would have showed it if any one could have seen them—that he was struggling most mightily with the circumstance that he, John Todd, was actually on the defensive against his wife!

This was not only incredible. It was intolerable. Furthermore it was a situation that could not be borne for any length of time without an explosion. And John did not like to explode; so he said briefly and quietly and for all time—

"Ye'll not speak of this again, Bella?"

"Of what, John?" just as quietly.

"What ye were sayin' afore."

"What was that, John?" still more quietly.

"About me and—and that wumman."

"What did I say about ye, John?"

"Ye said—ye said—I'm tellin' ye Bella ye're not to speak o' it!"

"Then I'll no' be able to speak at a', John, because I don't know what ye mean."

"Then haud your tongue!"

Followed a volcanic pause in which John's voice, which had hardly been raised above a whisper, echoed and reechoed in Bella's ears just like a thunderclap. Even her lips went white and her soft brown eyes lost all of their softness in a moment. Then, steadily and decisively, she said quite simply:

"All right, John. I'll do that."

After this came silence; a profound and stubborn quiet; John looking straight into the darkness beyond Ruth Kenley's vegetable garden and seeing nothing; Bella staring directly at the hospital light and seeing it grow bigger and bigger until it flared like a spotlight upon the name and fame of Lali.

Presently John said by way of making a suggestion, and apparently anxious, since he had asserted his authority, to forget the incident:

"Maybe I should go over and try to have a talk wi' Calvert? I could come back again and tell ye what he's got to say for himself afore I go across the creek."

Bella had nothing to say. Her mouth was a firm and uncompromising line, and whether he went to talk to Calvert or stayed where he was seemed likely to make no difference to her. Also, she kept her gaze steadily fixed on the hospital, and when John became aware of this, he began rubbing the palms of his large hands on the knees of his trousers, looking at them and at Bella's face alternately.

"Aye," finally and coming slowly to his feet. "I'll do that. Ye'll tell Miss Kenley where I went if she asks?"

Bella's eyes did not lift or come away from the hospital light for an instant. Neither did she say whether she would tell Ruth Kenley or not. She said nothing as carefully and completely as any wax figure; with the difference that John knew that no Imrie he had ever heard of had been made of wax or anything like it. The Imries—and particularly the Andrew Imries—were kittle cattle when their backs were up.

Also, John realized in that moment, with something of a shock, that while a man might command his wife to silence and be reasonably sure of obedience if he knew she had been brought up right, it was an altogether different matter to command her into speech, whether she had been brought up right or not.

Silence was the inalienable privilege of any woman, and John had known one in particular, a meek and trifling appearing handful of a woman, who had succeeded in making her man's life miserable for years through the simple medium of saying nothing. Not a word.

This was an awful prospect, and with the tips of his long and powerful fingers resting on the veranda rail, he looked down at Bella speculatively, trying to make up his mind what to say to her. Then he spoke again, quietly enough—

"Ye'll tell Miss Kenley."

No answer. Not even the twitching of a muscle of the eye. John Jock Todd, for all his middle name, might just as well have been one of the veranda uprights.

And Bella was not sulky. Neither was her prettiness marred by any evidence of anger. She was as calm and as cold as a plaster cast, and had ceased to be merely pleasant to look upon. Somehow or other the round line of her face had become straight and superior, something after the manner of Ruth Kenley.

John's finger tips began to tap the veranda rail slowly and his long lantern jaw seemed to contract little by little, until his teeth could shut no tighter. A native in a uniform went past at a scuffling trot, and Ruth Kenley, still moving about in the living room seemed likely to join them at any moment.

But Bella saw only the hospital light and heard only the sound of John's voice saying, "Then haud your tonue!" just as if she were a bairn, and not the woman who had given up the name of Imrie for the name of Todd.

And John saw only Bella's face; the steady, unblinking look in her eyes particularly, and remembered the patriarchal Andrew Imrie with a sharp distinctness that scarcely left anything to the imagination.

So his fingers stopped tapping on the veranda rail. His jaws relaxed slowly, and something akin to pride came into his solemn eyes.

"Aye," he decided sonorously. "You're one o' them. No' a doubt in the world about that. Say guid nicht to Miss Kenley for me. I'll no' be back."

He walked off the veranda without another look or word, and Bella heard his step go down the concrete path until he decided to take a short cut across the lawn, and then she lost it. But only her ears followed him that far. Her eyes did not leave the hospital light until Ruth Kenley came out.

## CHAPTER XXI

### AND SPEECH

"ALL alone? Where is Mr. Todd?"

Ruth's tone was sympathetic in an effort to drown out the effect of what she was now mentally referring to as "that awful dinner"; and finding Bella alone made this laudable intention somewhat easier. Or she hoped it would. Bella looked around and up.

"Mr. Todd's gone over to the annex to speak wi' Mr. Calvert," she said in a perfectly normal tone. "He said I was to say guid—I mean good night to ye for him."

"Oh, yes—to see Mr. Calvert."

The sympathy went out of Ruth's voice in a moment, and she became suddenly and most intensely interested in a somewhat ghostly squad of Hausa who were going past in the direction of the wharf.

"I understand Mr. Calvert has been distinguishing himself again. Quite an—er—an unusual character, isn't he?"

"Aye," dryly. "Is your brother going to put him out—now?"

Ruth made no answer. But her hands came tightly together in her lap, and for a little while, whether Bella felt it or not, the pause was painful.

"Maybe I shouldna'—I mean should not have asked that?" Bella suggested presently and her glance strayed back to the hospital light. "For when a's done, it's no' much o' your business or mine. Not to talk about it any way."

If this was intended to be conciliatory it failed completely of its effect, principally because Ruth felt that the matter *was* her business, later to be discussed at much greater length by her brother, Captain Talbot and herself. Not that Talbot would have very much to say. Nor Kenley either for that matter.

However, Ruth did not intend, for a moment, to discuss it with Bella, and therefore kept her thoughts upon the subject to herself. After a while, in what was really a desperate attempt to be really friendly, she said upon an impulse:

"You know, Mrs. Todd, I'm quite sure you don't know what a delightfully funny, queer little thing you are! Why, you're positively fascinating at times, and I'm sure I wish we could——"

"No funnier or no queerer to you than you are to me," Bella interrupted with a dry smile, her eyes still upon the hospital light. "And no littler either. It's accordin' to how ye happen to be lookin' at it."

"Gracious!" trying not to betray a sudden shortness of breath. "You don't beat about the bush much, do you?"

And Bella suddenly rose. Her eyes were more upon the light than on her hostess, and when she spoke her voice was just a trifle hard, but by no means loud or offensive to the ear.

"Why should I beat about the bush? Why should I let mysel' be tolerated by you? And let ye call me a funny, queer little thing as if I were a kind o' jumpin' jack that you had a mind to be amused by?"

"Why, Mrs. Todd——"

"Oh, dinna look so surprized! The first time I ever met ye, ye said as ye were leavin' my husband's office, 'Good-by, Mrs. Todd. So charmed to have met ye,' or some kind o' white lie like that. And ye were lookin', not at my face, but at a wrinkle in my stockin' when ye said it. I knew that wrinkle was there, and I'd been trying to work it out, without you seein' me, a' the time you were in the office, but instead o' bein' the lady ye were probably brought up to think ye are, ye noticed the wrinkle, and let me know that ye noticed it the very last thing afore ye went out."

"Mrs. Todd, I assure you——"

"Och, dinna make excuses, to me, Miss Kenley. You're a woman and I'm a woman and we know what a woman's excuses in a case o' that kind are worth. Of course, ye wouldna do a thing like that to one o' your own kind! Not you. But I was just a funny, queer little thing that was beneath any such ladylike conseederation. And I was the only other white woman in the place and ye just couldna help wantin' to give me the notion that ye were made o' some kind o' special clay the Lord had set by, just till he was ready to make you.

"Ay, Miss Kenley," determined to get it all out and giving Ruth no chance to interrupt, "it's easy enough playin' the lady afore folk ye think are as good or better than you are, but it's awfu' hard to keep it up when ye think ye're not bein' watched, and think ye have a chance to show off.

"And that's all snobbery is. Just showin' off. And maybe it would be kind o' funny if it wasna so pitiful. But if my faither could see and hear ye toleratin' a bairn o' his—" Bella shook her head sadly—"he'd get the best laugh he's had in twenty year. Good night to ye, Miss Kenley. I'll send a Kroo-boy up for my trunk."

"Mrs. Todd! Good heavens! You can't go like this! What on earth will every one—your husband—Mr. Kenley—think? You don't realize what you are doing! You're upset! Hysterical. Why—you can't—Mrs. Todd!"

But Ruth might as well have tried to stop a tornado. Bella was done with pretense. She was done with lies. And she regretted nothing she had said: not a word. It had been boiling and boiling inside of her for months; and somehow or other, the glare—it was a glare to Bella—of the hospital light had made it boil over. So while she was at it, she was going to settle that matter too. And if Ruth Kenley or anybody tried to stop her——

"Mrs. Todd!"

This final protest and appeal from Ruth was uttered rather weakly from the depths of a Madeira chair into which Bella, to make a path for herself and with little more than a gesture, had suddenly toppled her.

After which, Bella went right on; down the concrete strip to the main path and then on, steadily and without pause, straight into the darkness of the broad government lawn, toward the hospital light.

RUTH did not follow. The slight, inconsequential push that had landed her so emphatically in the chair, told her without the need for any further demonstration, that it would be useless for her to attempt to stop Bella's progress by force. And since Bella seemed to be deaf to words of any kind, Ruth simply sat and gasped, and tried to think of the right thing to do while Bella disappeared into the dark.

Ruth assumed, since Bella was crossing the lawn and not going down the path to the gig-wharf, that she was going to the annex where John Todd had gone to speak with Calvert. If this were the case, it was not improbable that Bella would be induced to return and thus avoid the possibility of the unpleasant talk that would spring up if her unusual method of taking her leave became public property.

Therefore, when Ruth had recovered her breath, she scribbled a hasty *chit* to "Mr. Todd" and despatched a boy with it as quickly as possible. Another *chit* went in search of Kenley who had gone back to the office, and yet another, and most expressive of all, scurried up toward the barracks.

> DICK:
>
> I've just been informed that I'm no lady. And I'm almost on the verge of believing it. If you have a minute—or half of one—please come down and tell me what on earth I must do about it. I feel just as I am sure the Lali woman does. RUTH.

There was not much repentance in this, nor any great suggestion of anything except that she had decided to be amused by Bella's homily on snobbery; indicating perhaps that it had pattered uselessly like rain upon soil that had not been plowed or harrowed in ages, and declaring at the same time that generations of faith in any kind of cult or cussedness is not wiped out in a moment.

So that she really did not feel in the least like "the Lali woman" who, though resting peacefully in a spotlessly white hospital bed, was by no means comfortable. There were too many windows in the hospital, and at every one of them, Lali could see Biko's soft brown eyes telling her to arise and walk and leave her bed behind her.

The Allobar hospital was not a real hospital. It had six beds and employed a varied complement of ward orderlies, according to the number of patients being cared for. But there were no nurses, and, saving for Dr. Allen and his voluble clerk, no regular staff of any kind.

Sometimes for weeks at a time all of the beds were empty, not because Allobar was any more of a health resort than any other fever-ridden settlement in the Delta, but simply because the hospital was more of an experimental or observation station, and did not care for patients unless for various reasons, their ailment or their need for hospital treatment was unusual.

Lali was unusual enough, and the only other patient was a Hausa, who was suffering from a bone disease, the exact character of which was more or less of a mystery to Dr. Allen.

This Hausa could have told Lali there were no eyes at any of the windows; and he knew this without a doubt because his eyes kept moving up and down the oblong-shaped room incessantly, just as they had been doing every night for weeks.

However, Lali would not have believed him. She could see Biko's eyes quite plainly; not all of the time, but every now and then, just as if Biko had bobbed up, stayed a while, then bobbed down again.

Lali did not know that the eyes appeared when she was afraid they would, or that they vanished when she fought to resist them with all the frenzied desire for freedom that was in her. To her the eyes merely came and went, came and went, and presently she knew they would come to stay.

Then she would get up and walk out of the hospital, past the dozing ward orderly, and through Dr. Allen's office and laboratory where a somnolent clerk held vigil at the doctor's discretion. Where she would go after that she did not know.

But she did know that there would be no pain in her back—nothing. All things—the ward orderly, the hospital, the government beach—would vanish. Everything would become blank and black, and presently she would find herself in a near-by native village, or walking along a bush path, or sitting on the matted deck of a canoe with her cheek on Biko's breast and—no knife in her waist belt!

This furious thought, accompanied by a perfectly audible "Augh!" kept Biko's eyes away for some time. It also aroused the ward orderly, who resented Lali's intrusion into the hospital in proportion to the amount of sleep he assumed she would deprive him of.

"What's matter? You make palaver foh me?"

Thus Lali, whose glance was turned in the orderly's direction, saw Bella Todd before he did, and the orderly thought the sound she made then was one of fear of him. This pleased him very much until Bella, still going straight to her objective, pushed him out of the way just as she had done the clerk in the office and, before him, Ruth Kenley.

And so she stood over Lali's bed quietly and without any evidence of anger, but determined above all things to know whatever there was to know about John and this woman.

Although Lali knew "white man fash'," it was her first experience with a white man's wife, and in the first second or two she knew it was not going to be a pleasant experience.

She remembered the lie she had told about this white woman's husband; a lie that, told of a black man or of some white men she had known, would not have been at all disturbing.

But she had known that it would be a most disturbing lie to John Todd, else she would not have told it. And now his wife——

Lali was in bed. And there was no fight in her. So she covered her head with the bedclothes and out of the muffling folds, Bella heard over and over again:

"Be lie! Be lie! No' be him! I sick too much! No flog me no mo'. Be lie! Be lie! No be him piccin'! Be 'nother man. No be him! I sick too much! No flog me no mo'!"

Bella listened perhaps half a minute, paying no heed to the gaping orderly, the frightened clerk or to the Hausa, whose eyes had stopped roving up and down and were now centered on one spot. Then Bella leaned over, took a good grip of the bedclothes and yanked them off Lali's ostrich-like head.

"What be lie? What thing you do make my husband angry all time? Talk true ye black besom or I'll choke the life oot o' ye!"

Just then Lali thought Bella's eyes were a shade worse than Biko's. And if she could have been spirited out of the hospital at that moment, even her cheek on Biko's breast and no knife at her waist-belt, would have been preferable to being so utterly at this white woman's mercy.

She had no quarrel with Bella. The only hate that had survived the miserable episode was her hatred of Zatza, which would be satisfied only when both Biko's and Zatza's heads bleached under the same tree. Or something to that effect.

"Be—be lie!" she whispered at last, and her lips were trembling and gray with pain and fear. "I say be Mas' Todd piccin', but no be him! Be 'nother man. I lie too much. I no *savez* Mas' Todd catch white wife. Be so I lie! No be him piccin', mar. No be him! An' no flog me! No flog me no mo'! I no fit! I go die! No flog me no mo'!"

Then Lali, of all things Bella had not expected, smothered her face in the pillows, and in pain and fear and weariness of the flesh, sobbed hysterically just like any other woman, her breath coming in shrill spasmodic gasps, as if she were going to choke at any moment.

Bella, however, knew better than this. So, after a little while, she sat down on the edge of the bed, took hold of one of Lali's hands and stroked the arm gently from elbow to wrist, over and over again, talking to her in a low, crooning voice, the sound of which, rather than the words, being the important thing as far as Lali was concerned.

And as Bella crooned, she smiled wistfully, the anger gone out of her eyes completely. She knew now why John's wrath against Lali was so thunderous and why he had become so nervous and excited that evening.

Being the woman she was, she guessed also why Lali had told a lie of that kind in preference to another. Therefore, some of the words she crooned to the Ibo girl, who did not understand them at all, were these:

"Dod, lassie! Dinna greet. There's no need o' that. I didn't know there was another woman on earth who had sense enough to like that man o' mine that much! I'm real glad to meet ye! I am that. And ye're not to bother about the tellin' of a lie that nobody wi' any sense would believe. No' a bit. That's no' the kind o' lies that hurt, unless laughin' at them makes a body's side sore. Ye've got to be a more convincin' liar than that, my lass. Now, now, dinna greet——"

The voice crooned on and on until suddenly there was a slight bustle in the outer office, and Dr. Allen came in.

"Good heavens, Mrs. Todd! What are you doing here? I understand——"

"Wheesht! Till I put this bairn to sleep."

"But Todd's looking——"

"Sh-h-h-h!"

The sound of Allen's voice had lifted Lali's head out of the pillows, but it dropped back again in a second or two; and while Allen fidgetted from one foot to another and gave every appearance of wishing to get Bella out of there as quickly as possible, Bella continued to stroke Lali's arm and to assure her in that same crooning voice that she was in no danger.

Several minutes later, everything about Lali had gone black and blank, just as she had predicted it would. But she was still in the hospital and she would remain there until she woke up. And though Bella's system was somewhat different and more beneficient than Biko's, the result, fundamentally, at least, was the same.

"Really, Mrs. Todd," Dr. Allen protested sotto voce, as they passed out into the office. "You should not have come here. They mustn't find you here. Your husband —I—Todd's most —— upset and if he knew you had come here——"

"What are ye feared for? Your reputation?" Bella laughed up at him. "Don't ye bother. It's safe enough wi' me."

Then seriously—

"What's my man lookin' for me for?"

"He got a note from Miss Kenley—I was with him and Calvert at the time—saying you were coming over to the annex, and——"

"The annex! I never said anything about goin' there! To that men's boardin' house! What does Miss Kenley think I am? Daft!"

Allen, who was still young in the service, did not know what Ruth Kenley had thought and did not care. He was a tall, lean-faced, comparatively young man, with a small black mustache which he had a nervous habit of plucking as if he would have liked to have had a real mustache that his fingers could have properly taken hold of.

"I—really, Mrs. Todd—you mustn't be found here! Can't you understand that I—that you——"

"Oh, I'm goin'," Bella assured him. "But you needn't push me out. Ye say ye don't know what Miss Kenley——"

"How should I?" testily. "I didn't see the note. Todd just told me you had started for the annex before the note was sent, and as you hadn't arrived, he asked me, since I was coming up this way, to send back word if you had come here. Why should he think you would come to the hospital at this time of night if he didn't suspect——"

"Losh, man, what a guilty conscience ye've got! And what awfu' conceit!"

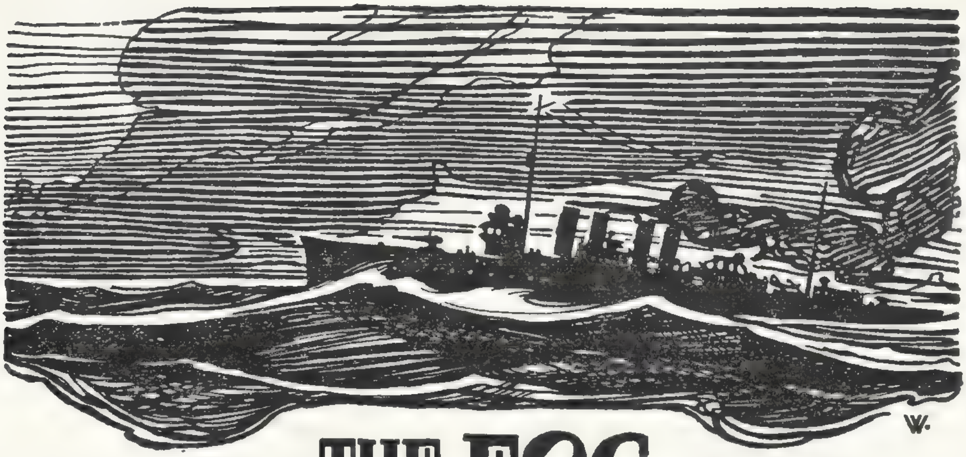
"Well, confound it! Both Todd and Calvert looked horribly suspicious and queer——"

"Oh, is Mr. Calvert sober?"

"Mostly."

The voice was not Allen's. It came from beyond the open door.

TO BE CONCLUDED



# THE FOG

### By Robert Emerick

THE light of day had left the sea. There was no wind save that created by the driving destroyer, but the air was raw and permeating in its quality of early spring. The darkness had the character of being curiously indeterminate, as if it had neither beginning nor end and therefore was possessed of tremendous magnitude. The tangible world seemed contemptuously small, and in it there was only one ship with its company. Only they, sailing forever in the midst of a terrifying loneliness. Even the unseen sea beneath them was unreal in the darkness. The waves leapt up from nothing, and after a brief flash above the infinity of water, disappeared once more to whence they had come.

The second dog watch was drawing to its completion. In the forecastle, young Parsons, Seaman, 2nd Class, who would stand a bridge lookout during the night watch, was already making ready his clothing for the trick. Old Ferguson, the boatswain's mate, almost black from the tropic sun, sat at the table with his enormous shoulders hunched over a grimy sheet of paper upon which he was striving determinedly to write a letter. Robinson, lanky and almost cadaverous-looking with his dark deep-set eyes, sat directly across from him, reading from a khaki bound Y. M. C. A. Testament, reading aloud occasionally an outspoken passage that particularly impressed him. There was a card game on, and a lot of quiet talk; the expression and comparison of plans; visits home, seeing friends, the girls ashore; leave and liberty.

There were steady white lights, and the white reflection of the cork-dotted curving sides of the ship; long, edged, drop-leaf tables; yellow ditty boxes, brown stanchions, and the tiered rows of iron bunks, two and three high between the decks.

Parsons, rummaging through his effects, came upon a small ukelele. He examined the strings, found them all there, struck a cord or two and began to sing. It was not very musical and his voice was less than fair, but the words were touching to the funny-bones of that home-going, happy crew. They laughed easily and loudly, including old Ferguson, who had just about come to the end of his tether in letter writing. Parsons went on:

> "Said Crozier to de Lozier,
>   I'm a fine bird you can see—
> From Ballarat to Barnegat
>   The world thinks well of me."

Over the top bunk came a dark, tousled head and a sunburned face frowned into the light. He spoke, and his deep voice was truculent.

"Hey, you below, belay that noise. I've got the midwatch, and how d'you expect me to sleep?"

"Never mind him, kid, let's have some more," Ferguson urged genially, as he swung back and forth a leg that was crossed

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*"The Fog," copyright, 1925, by Robert Emerick*

over the other. "What d'we care if he don't like it? Ain't this the last night out? We'll be in the Navy Yard tomorrow. Everybody's happy."

So Parsons struck a new chord and went on with an uncertain chorus:

> "Away, away with the sword and drum,
> Here we come, full of rum—
> Lookin' for somebody to put on the bum.
> In the Armored Cruiser Squadron."

The listeners applauded lustily, and after a moment's stop for breath all was ready to go on with the ditty. Then the man in the bunk projected his head again, his eyes had narrowed to two slits and the deep voice rumbled in his anger:

"Parsons! I told you to belay that noise! Now one more peep out of you and I'll get down there and bump your knob. Just one more peep, that's all."

The young sailor looked rather questioningly toward his powerful old ally Ferguson and was reassured by a nod and a wink. So he winked back and sang tauntingly:

> "There's 'cuda in the ocean and sharks in the sea,
> But I ain't a bit scared 'cause they can't ketch me."

He had barely finished when a long leg swung over the edge of the bunk, and a long slender body, clad only in underwear followed immediately. The man dropped to his feet, the action full of the fine grace of a tiger, and set his balance instantly to the slight rise and fall of the deck. The eyes were almost hidden behind the straight black brows and the hard fists were tight. Somebody said

"Stand up to him, kid. He's scared of you. You remember how he backed down on the dock at Martinique."

Parsons edged up, small, cocky, impudent. He tapped his bare, light-haired head, and jeered openly:

"Here's my knob. Now let's see you bump it. G'wan, let's see you do it."

Cobb balanced himself for a moment, then struck. The blow was so swift that not more than two of the entire company saw it. Little Parsons seemed fairly to shoot up from the deck, as if a powerful spring had been released beneath his feet. For an instant the white uniformed body hurtled midway between the brown deck and the white lights, then crashed with tremendous force against the table and finally collapsed, silent and inanimate at their feet.

* * *

IN THE forecastle there wasn't a sound. Outside, and noticed for the first time that evening, a monotonous brushing of the water along the sides was like a light wind in the trees. Robinson had stopped in the midst of a passage in his Testament and was staring with his mouth wide open. Old Ferguson had his pencil clenched in his hand like a club and was obviously bewildered. The card games were stopped. Parsons lay like a heap of soiled white clothes.

Old Ferguson collected himself the first. He dropped the pencil and stretched to his full height, and his enormous shoulders swayed in the gust of his fury. Then a scuffling of feet began and grew precipitously, to a bumping and rustling of hurriedly arising bodies; a time of quick breathing. It was all like an avalanche forming, voiceless, merciless, annihilating. Cobb had a momentary feeling of despair from the thought that he was more surely foredoomed to an extreme beating than little Parsons had been in the high moment of rash jeering. There would be no thought of an even fight, man to man. His surly disposition had kept him from having a real friend in the forecastle, and his heavy fist had flattened a favorite as well as a man much smaller than himself.

His enemies hurled themselves upon him one after one, as fast as they could, and he met them like the lithe, crouching tiger he was. The steely arms with their crowns of hard fists shot forth again and again, possessed of the speed of lightning. They disappeared each time deep into the sea of moiling sailors, finding marks in the strained faces and plunging bodies. But the brown and white flood came on from all sides and crushed him to the deck. The breath left his body and it became a place of torturing pain. Then Cobb's consciousness quietly went out.

"He's down. Stand back a minute."

It was old Ferguson, as always, the leader. He leaned over the prostrate form and his blood dripped upon it from a long cut over the eye. Cobb's eyes were closed and the blood trickled from his mouth and nose; nearly all his clothing had been torn from him and the exposed skin was a maze of welts and bruises.

Ferguson raised him, the great muscles of his arms handling the man easily.

"He got plenty," he observed grimly. "Next time he'll pick out a man his size."

Then he threw the unconscious man into his bunk and turned unconcernedly away. Parsons was up, by that time. His face was white and he looked sick.

"How d'you feel?" old Ferguson asked casually. "Not so good, eh? That bird can hit. Look at my eye."

"The dirty ——," said little Parsons with a faint flaring of spirit, even though a cutting pain in his chest accompanied each breath. "I'll fix him for this all right. My side feels as if it had been smashed in and my head aches. But I'll get even."

"That is not a Christian way," said the cadaverous Robinson in his slow voice that was wide and hollow like his face. "There has been blood enough around tonight. Besides are you not brothers? The Book says so."

THE time had come for the changing of the watch, and little Parsons dragged his aching bones to the darkness and chill winds of the topside. There he stopped for a moment and drank deeply of the cool water and secured some relief from a burning thirst.

Out on the starboard wing of the bridge he relieved the lookout and set himself to the four-hour task of staring into the unlighted reaches of the sea. The relieved watch descended from the bridge, the fresh one settled into its position, and silence replaced the sounds of men. The deep and distant hum of the turbine was rythmic and soothing; the invisible sea slipped past, murmuring quietly along the sides; the artificial wind hummed monotonously in the rigging.

The night seemed a trifle less dark than it had been immediately after sunset. It was possessed of a faint phosphorescence, and from overhead the light of a few indistinct stars filtered through the haze. From his station Parsons could see the figure of a man at the wheel, and it was as if he were part of the ship. There was no visible life in the erect body nor in the bronzed profile tinted with a weak orange by the binnacle glow. Only occasionally the arms would move insignificantly as he turned the rudder a little to bring her back after some slight falling off from the course. Then Mr. Hawkes, who had the deck, would speak from out of the blind shadows—

"Keep her on 348."

And the man would reply laconically—

"348, sir."

About once every half hour Mr. Hawkes would turn on the electric light under the canvas hood of the bridge deck for an inspection of the chart and in the shaded glow Parsons caught glimpses of the others upon the bridge, all staring ahead into the black wind and resembling bits of statuary in their lifeless immobility. Then he would turn out the light and the darkness, almost tangible in its intensity, dropped like a deluge, blinding them for the time to all things. During these moments the watch was a matter for the ears alone, and Parsons placed all his senses subordinate to hearing as he sought to catch any unfamiliar sound that might have been riding on the wind.

And so the night moved on, although seeming in its condition of invisible progress, a darkness silent and lonely without end. As the minutes dropped off, one after one, it seemed to Parsons that the dull rumble of the turbines — always an impression combined of hearing and feeling—was overwhelmingly loud. It was so bad that he could barely distinguish the swirl of the water and was uneasy lest he would fail to perceive in time some danger awaiting the rushing ship.

In addition to suffering that worry, he felt the pain in his chest to be getting steadily worse, and each breath of the raw wind fixed a piercing agony in his lungs. His bodily heat, imprisoned under the heavy coat, developed to a sensation of parching, and he opened the coat its full length and wondered that he had ever considered the grateful coolness of the wind to be biting or raw. Some one said, reading the phosphorescent figures and hands of the clock fastened to the forward side of the emergency cabin—

"It is five minutes to ten."

For a long time then there was only the regular pulse of the machinery and the sounds of the wind and sea. And Parsons clung to his post with the rigidity of a bridge stanchion, though sometimes almost breathless with pain, and kept his eyes determinedly into the darkness.

Finally he heard again someone talking on the bridge, and after a moment realized it was Mr. Hawkes in communication over the voice tube with the lookout in the crow's nest.

"It can't be land. Look again. Dead ahead all along the horizon . . . . Alright—all right. I'll look about it right away."

The muffled figure of an officer came over near to Parsons and with his night glasses peered anxiously ahead. Parsons was looking too, but he could see nothing with his naked eyes except the vague few stars and an occasional phosphorescent whirl of the water. And though he strained his ears for the splitting of surf upon a shore he could hear nothing but the normal sounds of wind and sea and the rumble of the destroyer's turbines.

Then Mr. Hawkes wheeled suddenly and called to his messenger in a sharp voice:

"Notify the captain we are running into a fog. He's in the emergency cabin. Look alive, now."

In almost the same instant they were in it. Thick layers of the whitish vapors piled unendingly against the red and green side lights, effectually dimming them, and the white light on the foremast became a mild indefinite glow, while the one on the mainmast disappeared as though it had been turned out.

From the annunciators came the deep rattle of chains moving swiftly through the iron tubing as the signal for reduced speed was transmitted to the engineroom. The whistle, which had been silent for days, burst forth in a prolonged blast, and the great depth and volume of its voice rolled over the ship as heavy and seemingly as tangible as the fog. The artificial wind added to its rawness the wet clamminess of saturated vapors so that the water grew upon their faces and clothing to trickle in cold streams over the exposed skin and soak steadily through the cloth. The captain paced back and forth athwart the bridge, staring into the impenetrable clouds from every available position and in impatient frequency dashed the collected moisture from his brows and lashes as if his restricted vision were caused by its presence there. The bridge messenger materialized from the mist and dispensed their oilskins.

Parsons in his pain and fever felt neither the cold nor the wet, but he put them on stiffly and returned to his almost petrified position of watching. The great voice of the whistle boomed out its regular, unanswered call.

The captain said:

"Where is Parsons? That young fellow has eyes like a cat. Let's send him out on the fo'csle."

So he left the bridge, fighting for his breath, and walked forward through the darkness and over the slippery deck plates until he arrived at the extreme bow of the ship and fastened his weakening fingers around the jackstaff. And there he clung, listening and peering, alone in the midst of an elemental unlighted world.

The sea was rising and the ship began a noticeable pitch. Added to the ever-present wet of the fog there came whipping gusts of salty spray. The jackstaff was slippery in his grasp. The narrow-steel plates of the bow beneath his feet would reel and fall away from under him in a way so much like utter collapse that he gasped; then far down in some bottomless cavity of the black water the sharp stem would pause momentarily, catch itself and soar straight upward with tremendous speed.

Parsons saw lights where there were no lights, heard sounds when there were no sounds other than those of the sea and his own ship. Yet, clinging there to the staff, with the cold water streaming over his wrists and up his sleeves, with death awaiting in the enfolding blackness for one small slip, with the profound bellow of the whistle crashing against his ears like a physical blow and the pain in his chest almost a delirium of agony, he kept his brain clear and, realizing that his senses were tricking him, withheld the alarm. Sometimes during the long silences an anxious hail from the captain would come through the darkness:

"Parsons, do you see anything?"

And he always answered in the negative.

There was a sweat which began to come out on him now and mixed with the wet of spray and fog, and he had lost all idea of the time. For him there had ceased to be a watch. He had two thoughts only and clung to them desperately, considering them one after the other again and again so that the repetition would guard against the forgetting of either. He would say:

"See anything?—Hold on—See anything?—Hold on."

The pain was terrible; the ship pitched viciously; the darkness seemed to have gotten inside of him. He turned and tried vainly to locate the bridge with his failing eyes. The fog hid all of the ship, almost up to his feet. He experienced the sensation that he was afloat in the endless darkness, alone upon a tiny bit of steel.

Then he thought he saw a crouching, sinister figure materializing out of the fog. It crept toward him soundlessly, and with a superhuman surety of foot. The ship pitched heavily, the bow plunging away beneath him deep into one of the great hollows of the sea. And suddenly it came to Parsons that he knew that ominous shadow so close to him. It was Cobb, an enemy there upon his destruction. A big, husky man, and he weak and sick, exhausted during the long watch. He had no chance. The black waters would soon have him to toss about. He shrieked wildly, unintelligibly, feeling hate, fear, defiance and certainly a great desire for help.

THE streaming bow of the destroyer began its upward sweep. The invisible spray came hurtling back out of the void in icy drops solid as hail. It pelted him from head to foot and poured from his oilskins like a deluge. But the fingers of death had gone, and in the temporary steadiness that the shock had brought to Parsons he realized it had been only fantasy. Far away on the bridge, the captain thought he had heard a shout and was calling anxiously:

"Did you hail Parsons? Do you see anything?"

And he replied in a credible voice—

"No, sir—Nothing sir," and clung with both his trembling hands to the slippery staff.

In the meantime the bridge messenger had gone below to break out the watch. He came alongside Cobb's bunk and shook him roughly.

"Come on, hit the deck, you. It's 11:30 and you'd better not be late relievin'."

From bunk to bunk he went, his wet oilskins glistening in the low light, and awakened those assigned to the midwatch. They would grunt and toss for a moment, then stretch slowly, awakening with conscious reluctance.

Cobb was wide awake in a moment, having slept badly. One eye was swollen about shut and each muscle of his body boasted a personal pain. And then there burned inside him a tremendous hate. Some day there would be a reckoning, an evening of the game. He cursed the whistle, so deep that it struck a vibration in the steel sides of the ship. A wandering wisp of the fog came in through the unlatched port and dispersed its damp chill over him. He shivered and fastened the glass, then swung over the edge of his bunk and dropped to the pitching deck. He had no desire to face his shipmates after the recent beating and was all dressed before the first leg of the aroused watch had reached from under the blankets.

Then he went to the topside and as he stepped over the hatch-combing was immediately enveloped in the fog. He felt his way in the darkness past the wireless room and the chart house door and came out on the forecastle.

He heard the captain's hail—

"See anything Parsons?" and the lookout's faint return—

"Nothing, sir."

A wave of inspiration came over Cobb. His enemy was alone, as far forward as possible, and completely hidden from the bridge. In fact no one could be seen more than ten feet away. The darkness was unbelievable. Even the four-inch gun and the vertical span of its shield were invisible from the close region of the chart house. It was an unparalleled chance to even the game. A slight push, a quick return to the bridge in readiness to begin his watch—who could catch him up? They would not know how long their lookout in the bow had been missing. Nothing could be done but to log it as an accident. Even the sea, by its roughness increasing the hazards to a bow lookout, would add weight to the theory of an accident.

He crept forward, tigerish in the darkness. The narrowing bow dipped, shivered, soared upward; the icy spray hurtled over him. the flying drops stinging sharply in his face. In his ears was the wild squelching of the water beneath the plunging stern, and its billowing along the sides. Then the profound bellow of the whistle filling the fog with its warning. The deck narrowed acutely, widened temporarily, and he was past the anchors. An indistinct, amorphous mass developed immediately before him; it was like a huge clot of darkness.

Cobb stopped, realizing it must be his

enemy, and for a moment the breath hung in his throat and he felt a little dizzy under a wave of nervousness. Then he steadied and crouched, balancing, for the final rush.

Suddenly and unexpectedly, the black mass moved and spoke. Then it laughed, a gurgling laugh, eerie and terrible, born in the insanity of delirium. There was no sound like it in the vapor-filled night. Cobb, crouching so close upon the tiny peninsula of steel, received it in overwhelming horror and developed a fit of trembling.

"I ain't afraid of you this time Cobb—I know you ain't real and no ghost can't hurt me. I can fix you with one punch—see?"

Cobb had no time to turn and run. The black figure, bulky in its oilskins leaped upon him, wet, cold, terrible. The lean fingers warmed at his throat, the hot breath eddied over his wet face. The weight of the body hanging to him almost dragged him to his knees. For long moments they struggled there, Parsons in his delirium twisting with a tremendous energy that possessed neither aim nor reason, and Cobb weakened from shock and great dread, fighting to free himself.

Finally he screamed for help, again and again, as the bow dived deep into the sea in one of its regular plunges, the darkness was filled with the flying darts of spray. He heard voices upon the forecastle loud and excited, answering his cries, and he tried to direct them, shouting—

"Here—it's Parsons!"

An immense wave came rushing in from out of the boundless waters and crashed into splinters on the sharp stem. The ship shivered, reeled under the impact. The drenched steel plates of the bow sailed quietly out from under their feet, slipped away into the fog. A man, tall and active, materialized suddenly where Cobb and Parsons had been struggling but an instant before, stretched long arms to them and found a momentary contact with Cobb's oilskins. His fingers slipped from their wet surface and the man disappeared. For a second Cobb heard a frantic shouting —"Man overboard!" and the deep blast of the whistle, extinguished under the embrace of the icy water.

He held his breath during the uncontrollable descent to an unguessed depth, and the slow smothering return to the surface. The roar of the ocean was torrential in his ears and the cold was paralyzing to his muscles. Yet he held tightly to Parsons, who had become unconscious and was past all self-concern.

Cobb felt a new fear, now, not of death itself, but of dying alone. And so he fought on through the buffeting of the waves that he might have a companion into the last valley of darkness. The enmity of life was far behind, with life, and replaced by the unbreakable bond of a common death.

* * *

COBB felt his head clear for a moment, above the waves. He breathed vital gasps of the foggy air, began to sink. Struggled to stay up, flailing the water with one arm. His hand crushed against something solid and massive close by. He gripped it with all his strength and checked his sinking. A wave roared voluminously over his head and Parsons was a dragging weight, but he did not let go, even though he realized that by releasing the unconscious weight on his arm, he could prolong his own existence. Now they would go through the veil together—or not at all.

When the waves permitted, Cobb shouted. Where they were, he didn't know, and what he shouted, he didn't know. It was just a hopeless, unintelligible sound and his weakened voice barely rose into the fog over the waves. And then he heard voices, that he took for delusions and kept on his monotonous shouting. One sentence he heard quite plainly:

"Here—quick—get a line—yes, yes—Hanging to the bottom of the sea ladder—hurry——"

A wave submerged them, its battering rush almost tearing loose his grip. When he could he began shouting again regularly and unemotionally into the impenetrable darkness of the fog. He was feeling much better in general for the cold had numbed all physical perceptions. He had no pain and the body of Parsons on his arms had ceased to be a burden. But he was very weary and had a great craving for sleep. He ceased shouting, his strength for it gone, and closed his eyes. Parsons was beginning to slip away from him and his exhausted fingers barely retained their hold on the vital support.

Then a light, the bright glare of the electric bulb veiled by the fog, shone into his eyes. Hands, rough from eagerness, seized on him, reached Parsons just in time, began dragging both of them out of the water. But Cobb did not know about that. He entered into the sleep of unconsciousness.

The ship resumed her homeward journey, the whistle boomed its deep regular warning into the fog, and the black waters, cheated at the last, twisted in vain round the sides.

# THE ANSWER

## by S. Omar Barker

NOW some have said it was the Cross,
And some the lure of gold
That brought Spain's knighted plumes to toss
Where desert sands enfold
The earth, and flaunting, marching suns
Command the cloudless sky.
Where murky Rio Grande runs
Men rode with Death—but why?

Gray deserts met them night and day;
Grim mountain-ghosts appeared;
They drove mirages from their way,
Nor faltered if they feared.
Oh, Coronado sought red gold,
Rodriguez brought the Cross,
Oñate came in conquest bold,
Disdainful of all loss!

But was that all? Did Zaldivar
And Stephen, who was black,
Come caravanning Death so far
Across this sun-killed track,
To give convoy to Friars Gray,
Or gather gold for kings?
Is that the best that we can say
For such adventurings?

Nay, not the lure of gold alone
Brought burnished helmets here;
Nor Cross, nor conquest for the Throne
The motive for each spear:
*We* know, who tread the outland trail,
Or sweep the sky, or span
The sea with spar and bellied sail,
What heart is in a man!

Gaunt Spaniard spirits, here's to you,
Whom hardship never palled;
Who, starving, fought the desert through
Because *adventure* called!

# THE BLACK MAGICIAN

by
George E. Holt

*Author of "The Hand of Allah," "Chuckling Gold," etc.*

SIR MORTIMER JONES—alphabetically qualified, but a most human man—was His Britannic Majesty's Minister to Morocco, and the time was that in which the life of a diplomat in the land of the Moors was a bed of Scotch thistles, with a pillow of prickly pears.

Those were the days before the world had been purged of its selfishness by an altruistic war, when France and Germany waged diplomatic battle with bare fists for control of Morocco, with England, as the ancient friend of the Empire, preparing to sell that friendship for thirty pieces of Egyptian silver.

Wherefore it strongly behooved the diplomatic envoys of the great triumvirate to observe closely the placing of their feet, lest one, or both, colleagues should have cunningly digged a pit for the other's undoing.

Now as Job became inured to his boils and his ash pile, so had Sir Mortimer become accustomed to the thorns in his official bed. But one can imagine that Job would have moved restlessly if his body had come into unexpected contact with a live coal—thrown on the ash pile in a moment of thoughtlessness by one of his daughters-in-law.

In like manner, Sir Mortimer had reacted to the discovery of a scorpion in his bed of thistles. And this scorpion had two tails with which to sting. One was the conviction that a certain very powerful native chief, who was most important to English plans, had sold out to Germany; the other was that on board a rattling little steamship, now rocking across the Straits from Gibraltar to Tangier, there was a Very Important Personage, one of whose names was Constance and whom people addressed as Your Royal Highness.

Sir Mortimer knew that in her party would be some one from the Foreign Office who, traveling purely for the purpose of serving the king's daughter, would find opportunity to go with him pretty thoroughly into the entire Moroccan situation.

Now, in the British diplomatic service the office of minister to Morocco was one of the lesser posts, but it had certain perquisites, and a fool was not made *bashador* to get him out of the way of those at home. One of these perquisites was residence in Tangier, which was headquarters of all the foreign diplomatic missions and of most of the intrigue and conspiracy and revolution which, in those days made life interesting for all Morocco.

Tangier was then a western Bagdad, with its Harun-al-Rashid, its Ali Babas—many Ali Babas and many times forty thieves—its Aladdin, who possessed a number of magic lamps, and more than one Scheherezade to tell tales which were never intended to be broadcasted.

Another perquisite was the honor of entertaining at the legation all visiting royalty and nobility, and occasionally a commoner of worth. Sir Mortimer for a number of days had been preparing to act as host to the Princess Constance.

*"The Black Magician," copyright, 1925, by George E. Holt.*

There is probably less new under the social sun than under any other luminary, and this was particularly true of Tangier, where official etiquette did not encourage such novelties at dinner parties as monkeys from Apes' Hill. Wherefore the host or hostess usually was hard pressed to devise something to put zest into a function.

There was, of course, the old snake charmer, with his gunny sack full of ancient snakes but unpleasant habits of expectorating and his inquisitive reptiles, made him unattractive as an entertainer. One could, and sometimes did, have some wandering or resident minstrel play the songs of Sidi Hammo, or other less worthy bards, but one could never tell when the song-bird would change his tune and begin on Rabelaisian verses culled from the Arabian Nights.

And there was also he who was variously known as Habib, or the Black Magician, or Master of the *Djinnoon*—a strange, huge black fellow who had come to Tangier from Allah knew where. He performed mysterious matters which caused him to be held in awe by the natives, and sometimes exhibited his arts for members of the foreign colony.

But he was a bold and independent person, this magician, and upon more than one occasion had venomously insulted European gentlemen who had had the temerity to request his aid as an entertainer. Sir Mortimer felt that he could in no wise afford to be turned down by any black man, magician or otherwise, so he had put Habib from his mind.

In view of what he knew concerning the Black Magician's idiosyncracies, the *bashador* was surprized when, as he was about to ride forth with the legation to meet the princess and her party at the landing stage, one of his guards approached him with a native who bore a message from the worker of mysteries and master of spirits.

This message turned out to be that the Black Magician would be pleased to entertain the *bashador's* guests at any hour after sunset which His Excellency might designate.

As the magician's own envoy bowed low upon completion of his master's message, the *bashador* heard faintly the sound of a steamship's whistle, and knew that the *Dersa* was entering the bay. Wherefore he spoke hurriedly and without thought.

"It will please me to have him come to the legation at eight o'clock this evening," he said. "And I thank him for his offer," and rode away.

Now, it is amazing, but none the less true that our unconsidered words and acts are of much greater importance than those which are premeditated. Wherefore, who can deny the participation in human affairs of that intelligence which some call Fate and some call Kismet and others call by other names?

The hand of God, whether that god be Christian or Moslem, Hebrew or Hindu, or any other of the countless Ones; the hand of the universal unknown, unguessable, incomprehensible. A premeditated word or act sometimes results somewhat, if not precisely, as we intended. But the unpremeditated word or act carries in itself, because of its unplannedness, the essence of chance, a dynamic force which, being released, may push in the most unexpected direction and cause most surprizing matters to take place.

Not far from the British legation, on the way to the landing stage, stands the great white horse-shoe gate which was the entrance to the home of the German *bashador*, Baron Zuttner. As Sir Mortimer approached it his thoughts were drawn from the princess and the night's entertainment, back to the matter which for weeks had been a thorn in his flesh.

There was no honor in the heart of the infidel; the forty thieves worked each for himself, and Ali Baba was Judas. That perfidy which Americans have symbolized by the doublecross was perfected by Europe during the settlement of the "Moroccan Question."

And now, as he rode, Sir Mortimer reflected grimly that he was about to become, or already had become, one of those upon whom the brand had been put—was assured that Germany had been tampering with the keystone of England's local arch of influence; in other words, that the powerful Kaid Hassan Ufrani, whose own and allied tribes controlled a very important and valuable stretch of north country, had sold out.

Besides which, there was another factor in the Moroccan situation—a vague, intangible force which made itself felt at the most unexpected moments in the most unexpected of places, sometimes completely wrecking the plans of one European nation or another, and sometimes bringing strange success to a hopeless infidel government.

Here and there about the country queer men journeyed on ostensible purposes of many varieties, and also made much noise—singers of songs, acrobats, players of *ghitaihs* and vase-shaped pottery drums. From town to town they wandered and the writing finger went with them.

The Shareefian Empire was on its deathbed, the sun was sinking on Sunset Land, but the spirit of the Moslem world lived and walked, unseen but felt, by those who had brought an end to an ancient nation. Aisawa, Hamadsha—a dozen brotherhoods; and the world-wide, powerful, secret Sanussiyah order—through them many things were made to happen, as the hand of Fate causes things to be—to the perturbation and confusion of the infidel and the perpetuation of the power of Islam.

Thus Sir Mortimer was perturbed, for the responsibility was very much his: the effective English diplomatic custom gives a man a job and lets him succeed or fail without wet-nursing. And the princess and her party were in the bay.

"He who is a traitor once will be traitor twice," he reflected. "I can buy him again if necessary, I suppose, at a still higher price. But—he who is a traitor twice will be a traitor a third time. Still, a way must be found, or I shall abruptly cease to be His Majesty's *bashador.*"

He arrived at the landing stage and put aside his problem in the business of greeting a very pretty woman in a gray traveling dress.

* * *

THE Master of the *Djinnoon* stood in the middle of the legation's big ball room. A hundred lights illuminated his every motion; two hundred eyes, including the blue-gray ones of Her Royal Highness, watched. He was a huge man, this ruler over a world of spirits, his hugeness exaggerated by voluminous flowing robes of black satin which, when he moved, whispered like a million of his *djinnoon.*

His face was like polished ebony, and round, and living with intelligence. Brown eyes glowed, and a faint smile sat lightly upon lips which were too thin to be purely negroid. A remarkable figure—a Pharaoh resurrected to reign over an invisible kingdom.

Now you must know that Morocco of that day—and undoubtedly of this—was as full of *djinnoon* as a soaked sponge is of water. Good white *djinnoon* devoting their lives to the accomplishment of worthy matters; evil black *djinnoon* with no motive except to bring bad luck to some human—and one had only to press ever so lightly upon the strata of native life, to cause the *djinnoon* to pour forth surprizingly—a sponge.

From slave to sultan, and from the first faint cry in this world to the last choking gasp, the spirit motiff runs through the life of Morocco, hand in hand—and perhaps more powerful after all—with the philosophy, the religion of *maktoub*, "what is ordained must be."

There is nothing occidental to which it may be compared, in prevalence and effect, except the American desire for financial success at the cost of all else. English conservatism and French national egotism approach it.

Hadj Hamed ibn Mohamed, of Akbel-Hamra, will obey as implicitly the promptings of a *djinn*, and with just as complete ignorance as to the reason, as James W. Broadway will obey that inner voice which prompts him to accumulate riches at the price of all other things. Hadj Hamed will sacrifice himself and his friend as promptly to appease an injured *djinn* or to secure the cooperation of helpful spirits, as James W. Broadway will do the same in order to conciliate the Great Spirit of America.

Thus, when the Master of the *Djinnoon* stood in the middle of His Excellency's ballroom, he represented to the watching guests three different things. To those who were yet inexperienced in the mysteries of Morocco, he was a weird black person about to perform tricks for their entertainment.

To those occidentals who had been lucky enough to have peeked into those dim secret corridors of native thoughts, he was representative of much of that occult pagan world which is infinitely more strange than the universe of matter. And to the others, a dozen native dignitaries wrapped in stately white robes and an atmosphere of aloofness, he was—I do not know. What was Moses to his people, when he worked miracles for Pharaoh's eyes?

The Master of the *Djinnoon* stood in the middle of the ballroom—a hundred lights showed his every motion—two hundred eyes watched him shake out the folds of a snowy luncheon cloth which His Excellency had requisitioned for the occasion from his own linen closet. The white square floated for a moment, then subsided slowly and evenly upon the waxed floor.

A hundred guests, the officially elite of a dozen countries, women in rare silks, gemdecked, men in splendid uniforms of rainbow colors, with gold lace shining like sun upon water, Her Royal Highness, daughter of a king—a hundred guests inched nearer to the white square which, for the time, mapped a mystic territory where spirits ruled.

The Black Magician bent, and thumb and forefinger seized the luncheon cloth at its center. Slowly he raised it, an inch, two inches, whispering sibilantly in a strange tongue to his *djinnoon*. A hundred lights beat inquiringly down upon him. Two hundred eyes——

Inch by inch slowly he raised the cloth. Six inches, a foot—and the whisper in an unknown tongue went on. Then he straightened suddenly, with a shout which startled. He swept the luncheon cloth away and stepped back a pace.

Before him, upon the waxed floor, was a great brass tea tray, bearing little cups and saucers, spoons, glasses, a bowl of broken sugar lumps—and a teapot full of steaming tea!

A hundred lights, two hundred eyes——

Some of the guests applauded gently; some of them were very very quiet; and a few, the native dignitaries, drew a swift breath which was almost a hiss.

And then, with black hands which were big but deft, the Master of the *Djinnoon* filled one of the little cups with the mint-flavored tea and offered it, with a little bow, and a little smile, to Her Royal Highness. Her ladies stared, and one lifted a jeweled hand as if in protest. But the Princess Constance was a king's daughter—and she sipped the tea. It was excellent tea; she knew.

The silence was broken by a rough sound which was just above a whisper.

"Sleight-of-hand—but clever."

It was Baron Zuttner, the German *bashador*, speaking to the German consul to Fez. The consul shrugged his broad shoulders; he had lived too long at Fez to be quick with explanations of things. He knew that in Morocco things happened which could never be explained to the mind, or in the mind, of any occidental.

This is a very deep knowledge indeed. Only those men of the west are wise who know they do not know, and cannot know, and do not seek to know. Because the belief in one's own wisdom is a pit of great depth; and a desire for knowledge which cannot be satisfied is a cancer of the soul; and the search for that which should remain hidden is the most direct way to Bedlam.

The Master of the *Djinnoon* heard the comment of the German diplomat, and turned toward him with a friendly smile. But, although it was apparent that he had understood the words, it was to the German consul to Fez to whom he spoke in Arabic. When he ceased speaking—

"He wants you, and me, to aid him in his next exhibition," explained the consul.

The baron shrugged his shoulders.

"It is scarcely dignified—" he began, but a young woman with blue-gray eyes, standing near him, overheard and laughed pleasantly.

"Oh, do as he wishes," she urged.

It was almost a command.

And, as the Baron had the greatest respect for royalty, he bowed in assent.

His Excellency, Sir Mortimer Jones, watched this little scene with an amused twinkle in his eyes, for the German *bashador* was a most distinguished and ponderous person—the sort which rarely loses its dignity, but which, when it does, is the most laughable spectacle ever presented to the critical eyes of men. Pompous, with an up-curling white mustache.

But the twinkle died away abruptly; Sir Mortimer's mind jerked over to another matter—the matter which was the prickly pear in his bed of thistles. What was the German consul to Fez doing in Tangier? Why had he left the capital and the sultan's court to make the arduous week's journey to the legation?

That he had arrived but an hour or two since, the *bashador* knew, because Baron Zuttner, being both personally unwilling and diplomatically unable to remain absent from a party given in honor of a British—*the* British—princess, had explained to Sir Mortimer that the arrival of the consul was hourly expected.

Wherefore, naturally, Sir Mortimer had

bidden the baron bring the consul with him to the ball, or leave word for him to toddle along to the legation whenever, during the evening, he should arrive. The German Minister and his baroness had come unaccompanied; Herr Doktor Schoenfeldt, the consul, had made his entrance later. But—why was he in Tangier? That it had to do with that accursed native chief whom Sir Mortimer was convinced had sold out——

A hundred lights glared, two hundred eyes watched, as the Master of the *Djinnoon* led the German *bashador* and the German consul away from the circle of spectators. A black-draped arm rested lightly upon each pair of German shoulders. The *bashador* he released at a certain spot; the consul he led a dozen feet farther.

A hundred lights showed two hundred eyes quite clearly that from the tea tray the Master of the *Djinnoon* took two tall, empty glasses, the sort that are still used in England, and two napkins.

One of the glasses he filled with steaming tea from the magic pot. Two hundred eyes saw him hand the empty glass to the German minister and the full glass to the consul. A hundred lights showed the consul change his hold upon the hot container, so that his pink fingers should not be pained, and two hundred ears heard his, "*Ach, das ist sehr heiss!*"

All eyes saw the Master shake a napkin in the air and drop it lightly over the glass, return and cover the *bashador's* empty glass in the same way.

A hundred lights showed to two hundred eyes a queer look of surprize, almost of pain, grow slowly upon the German *bashador's* face, while the Master, standing aside, rolled his eyes and whispered with whispering *Djinnoon.*

"*Aah!*" exclaimed Baron Zuttner, and again, "*Ach!*"

Then he swept the napkin covering from the glass——

Two hundred eyes gazed fascinated upon a glass of steaming tea in the baron's shaking hand. The Black Magician stopped his whispering. The consul gazed with uplifted eyebrows into an empty glass which a moment before had been full and had burned his fingers. And which he had not for a thousandth part of a second failed to grip.

Simplicity is strength. The Master of the *Djinnoon* bowed low to the princess, again to the other guests, and strode toward the door.

Sir Mortimer intercepted him at the portal and held out the hand of farewell, accompanied by words of appreciation; his other hand he laid lightly upon the Black Magician's shoulder. For a moment they stood very close, the huge loose sleeves of the Master caressing the brilliant dress coat of the *bashador.*

THE effect of Sir Mortimer's party was divided into three major portions, but Allah only knows on what distant shore the last faint ripples died. Or perhaps it would be better to say that it caused a trio of explosions, whose tremors reached at least as far as No. 10 Downing Street, the Wilhelmstrasse and the Quai d'Orsay.

In order of their occurrence, these blasts took place in the home of His Excellency Baron Zuttner, the German minister—that was upon the night of the party; in the office of the British *bashador*—that was the following morning; and in a certain North Moroccan town where an important chieftain ruled—and that was twenty-four hours later.

Baron Zuttner and the German Consul to Fez took as early a departure from the party as etiquette permitted, and hastened to the German legation for a two-o'clock-in-the-morning conference. By this may be judged the importance of the matter in hand. Besides which, the consul was to start at daybreak upon the return trip to Fez. Unnecessary delays, when one's hand holds the weapon, are inexpedient in diplomatic battle.

Entering the legation offices, they seated themselves at a big table lighted by an electric bulb which pendulumed slowly.

"This document, which is not precisely an agreement, but which will enable us to hold Kaid Ufrani, is to be shown to nobody except the Sultan himself," said the baron, heavily, reaching into an inside pocket of his coat. "The result——"

He ceased speaking, and his eyelids narrowed as do those of a man upon whom a searchlight has suddenly been thrown. His face turned from pink to crimson, and from crimson to a purple tinged with yellow by the electric bulb. Then, with a great German curse, he sank down in his chair and glared with protruding blue eyes at the consul.

"Gone," he gasped, at last. "Gone! But it is impossible!"

His hand again moved toward the pocket, but stopped and fell heavily.

"Impossible." The baron's voice was now high-pitched.

"Could it have fallen out—worked out—" The consul desired to be helpful and sympathetic.

"Impossible—fool!" retorted the baron. "Am I a child that I carry a thing like that as a girl would carry a love note? There is a button on the pocket. It could neither fall out nor work out. ——! I have been tricked—somehow.

"That pig of a Jones—but I only shook hands with him. That—hmph! hmph! That accursed negro who calls himself—But even that is impossible, unless one believes in his —— *djinnoon*. Which I do not. *Which I do not.* Which—I——"

The baron's audible reflections died away on a tone of doubt.

"His tricks," offered the consul, "were clever, but no more than sleight-of-hand—perhaps."

"Hmph!" growled the minister. "I tell you that accursed glass never left my hand after I once had hold of it. Strangely enough, however, I could *not* now swear that it was empty when I received it. But, ——! when did that black pig have opportunity to take the document from my pocket? For assuredly he did so.

"And how—" the baron's voice rose and cracked as another thought took possession of him—"how did he know I had it—that it even existed?"

He rose heavily, to walk heavily about. Suddenly he stopped and swung upon the consul.

"You will return to Fez as we intended," he said. "The only value to us in that document is lost, because it is now in other hands, its contents known. Even were we to recover it, it would be valueless."

He sank slowly into his chair again. His face was drawn and pale, and a fat hand covered weary eyes. Germany, in those days, did not pass lightly over a diplomatic *faux pas* in Morocco; the stakes were too high.

The consul was not a beginner in diplomacy; with a brief "*guten nacht*" he withdrew, leaving the baron to his thoughts.

SIR MORTIMER JONES had not been in error when he guessed that in the Princess' party would be one who, on behalf of the Foreign Office, desired to go over the eternal "Moroccan Question" with him. The morning following the ball, he sat in conference with Lord Brougham, giving that peer an insight into the less obvious operations of Moroccan affairs, but using every atom of his own diplomatic ability to postpone the evil moment when he would have to take up the problem of the northern chieftain, Kaid Hassan Ufrani.

Sir Mortimer had been a diplomat long enough to make a few mistakes, but not quite long enough promptly and cheerfully to admit those he did make. However slowly but surely the road of discussion came to that unpleasant feature.

"This—er—Kaid what's his name?" drawled Lord Brougham. "Hassan something-or-other. The one——"

His Lordship was interrupted by the entrance of the *bashador's* valet, who bowed respectfully and awaited his master's pleasure.

"Well, Parker?"

"Begging your pardon, Your Excellency, but in putting away your dress coat, Your Excellency, I came upon this." He held out a small folded square of thick, soiled paper to his master. "In the pocket. Not knowing but what it might be of importance—I have never before found papers in Your Excellency's dress coat pocket—I thought——"

"Nor am I accustomed to carrying documents there, Parker," said His Excellency, unfolding the paper without haste.

"Yes, sir; quite so, sir. And so——"

"My sainted aunt!"

It was not quite the reply that Parker had expected, and even the calm Lord Brougham lifted inquiring eyebrows, as he sat with elbows on chair arms, carefully tapping the finger tips of one hand against the finger tips of the other—a game in which he rarely missed.

"That is—" continued the *bashador*, hurriedly refolding the paper and slipping it into his pocket—"this is a memorandum I thought I had lost. How it came to turn up in my dress coat— Thank you, Parker; that will be all."

"Yes, sir; thank you, sir," Parker acknowledged, and withdrew.

"And now, oh, yes, you were inquiring, Brougham, about the chief Hassan Ufrani. The fact is—" the *bashador* paused to light another cigaret, to inhale deeply, to relax nerves which had been strung a bit too tight and suddenly smitten upon. Where the —— had that document come from, and how the deuce had it got into his dress coat pocket?—"the fact is, that Germany has been trying to seduce Hassan, but they have failed. That is to say, you know, that they succeeded in bribing him away from us. But—hm!—I have a hold upon him now which neither he nor Germany can break."

"Which is?" Lord Brougham yawned delicately behind a thin hand. "First you have him and then you haven't and then you have him again. It's like a jolly old game we used to play when I was a nipper. What d'you call it?"

"But this time he will remain with us," continued the *bashador*, ignoring the opportunity to delve into memories of childhood, "because I have—" the *bashador* hesitated a moment and smiled like Mona Lisa or the famous feline from Chestershire; now how the —— did that thing get there? "I have a document signed by him which completely spoils Germany's plans so far as he is concerned. And, moreover, would put his head over the Fez gate as quickly as the sultan's troops could carry it—if the sultan were to know."

"Excellent," approved the peer, but without enthusiasm. "Well, let's go for a lungful of fresh air, what?

" 'Put his head on the Fez gate,' " he repeated. "Beastly queer ideas of things here. Absolutely."

* * *

AND the third detonation occurred the evening of the same day when Kaid Hassan Ufrani, chief of an important tribe and city, looked into the eyes of a big black man who, on this occasion, called himself Habib.

"And that letter is in the hands of the British *bashador?*" It sounded like a repetition.

"I have said," replied the big black concisely.

"In that case my head is worth precisely what the *bashador* desires to pay for it."

"Or less," agreed Habib.

"And this is *your* work." The eyes of Kaid Hassan narrowed. "And is it permitted to know by what right——"

"Of course," Habib stopped him, with a gesture, and clasped his hands in a peculiar manner.

"*Allah!*" cried Hassan. "*Allaa!* The sign of the Order."

"The sign of the Order," agreed Habib calmly.

Rising, he mounted his big white mule and took the trail which led back to Tangier.

# THE CLAW NECKLACE

### by William Byron Mowery

*Author of "The Ghost Track," "The Scout," etc.*

"HOW much for this fella, huh?"

I jumped in surprize at the voice behind me. The last of the Dog Ribs and Yellow Knives had finished their trading and left my teepee many minutes since. Talking gutturally or singing snatches from *Bois Brulée* chanteys, they were knotted about their leaping fires before the caribou-skin lodges a biscuit toss from mine. I had been busy baling the furs they had traded to me, but not too busy to notice that no one could have entered by the tent door. I whirled around.

There stood a tall Indian of twenty-five or eight, neither Tinneh nor Dog Rib nor Yellow Knife, to judge by his head-dress and clothes with a touch of *voyageur* sauciness. His dark eyes sparkled in the gleam of the tallow light. His shiny horsetail hair was long enough to be braided, but it was not unkempt or shaggy. As I turned, he slipped his moccasins from the snowshoe toe-thongs and sat down beside my fire.

"How much for this fella, huh?" he repeated in the lower Mackenzie chinook jargon.

"You come tradee?" I queried, stroking the patch fox pelt which he held out and noting the fineness of its long silver king-hairs.

He nodded, tapping a small packet of furs which he had unslung from his tump-pack.

"What have for that fox fella, you?" I asked.

"Short-necked gun for him. Carbine yes. And one hundred little —— for to put inside the gun."

He looked critically at the Savage which I handed to him; and tore open the carton of cartridges.

"Huh!" he ejaculated. "This here two hundred little ——."

"I know. Keep 'em. Good skin, this fox fella."

"Good fella trader, you," he remarked laconically. "No skin um trapper. How much for this fella, huh?"

He held out the prettiest black beaver I had seen in many moons.

"What name you?" I inquired, warming to the strange tall Indian, but wondering why he had entered at the back of the tent.

He hesitated just a fraction of an eyewink, yet long enough to show he was inventing.

"Inno-potam," he answered noncommittally, giving the Dease Straits dialect for 'The man from afar.' "How much for this beaver fella, huh?"

I noticed that his eyes, which constantly patrolled the strip of snow between my teepee and the spruce fires, had lighted for an instant upon an H. B. belt ax fashioned like a tomahawk. I pushed it across to him, and he nodded.

After the beaver skin came a bundle of marten pelts, light as bank notes and almost as precious in Winnipeg or Edmonton.

Inno-potam traded carelessly, after the incident of the cartridges. We shook hands upon each bargain driven. Knives, tomahawks, moccasin beads, camping articles, a box of candy, gum and trinkets—at which last three things I wondered—went into the tump-pack as quickly as I pushed them across to him.

His bundle of furs was small and gave out too soon. He fingered a bright-red woolen shawl hungrily, and I conjured up a picture of a black-eyed young woman kindling toward the giver of that gift—and later wrapping a papoose in it. The mind of a married man, I reasoned, would not usually be running to candy, gum, trinkets and a red woolen shawl.

He passed it back slowly and began buckling on his tump-pack. I had decided to give him the shawl as a parting token and was wetting my lips to speak when Inno-potam's hand, busied with the breast buckle, disclosed a necklace of claws under his *attijek* cape. I leaned forward and examined them. Polar-bear claws they were —the longest and ugliest ones I had ever seen. On the river, when the Summer trippers would come down north to fight mosquitoes and get a taste of the primitive, I knew the necklace would be fetching.

"Trade?" I suggested, proffering the red woolen shawl.

"Huh, no!" exclaimed Inno-potam.

"Why not?" I demanded.

The Indian's tone seemed to imply that my suggestion was preposterous.

"Those—" he paused a moment, looked at me keenly, then went on—"are the claws of Naooksoak—immense white bear. You have heard of Naooksoak?"

I shook my head although old Opetik of the Dog Ribs not half an hour previously had recounted a medley of weird tales about the great white bear that roamed through the mud islands in the delta of the Coppermine. The stories which Opetik had told of Naooksoak were graphic whoppers, a confusion of fact and fiction which only an old Indian's imaginative and susperstitious mind was capable of. He had ended by solemnly swearing that the great white bear was a devil-child of Thorngaek, unkillable, gigantic, and possessed by a Wendigo spirit or cannibal lust. Hence the calm assertion of Inno-potam that he was wearing the claws of Naooksoak puzzled me so much that I lied, to see what would come of it.

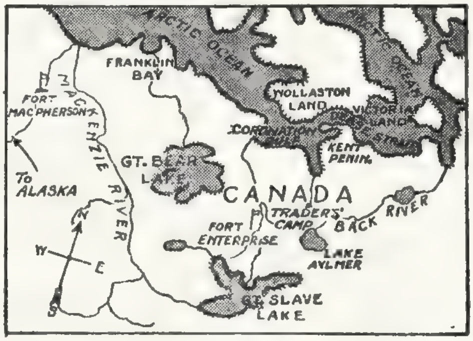
"How come you by claws of Naooksoak?" I queried. "And why not trade for woolen shawl?"

"There are more shawls in the *kozgee* of the white man; there is but one necklace of Naooksoak claws," retorted Inno-potam, lapsing into the deep-throated Dease River dialect which flowed as smoothly as seal oil from his lips.

He arose, peered out of the tent door, and resumed his seat. "I see you have lied, trader. You know of Naooksoak, as who does not? You are honest and have a tight mouth. Hear.

"IT HAPPENED last fall, in the late Moon of Flying Frost. The Tahierpikmiut had finished gathering their harvest of ducks and snow geese, of caribou speared in the lakes, of seal oil in seal skin bags, and of walrus for their *komatik* teams. The land had died, the sea was frozen over, and snow covered land and sea.

"Said the hunters of the Tahierpikmiut to themselves: 'Now is the time when Naooksoak will come ashore from slim seal hunting and stalk the white caribou in the coast hills. We will not hunt him ourselves; he has already killed three of our men and has run off with spears sticking in him like the quills of a porcupine. No one can kill him; but this man Lil-o, this boaster who hunts by himself like the slinker wolf, thinks he can. He scoffs at the idea that Naooksoak is a devil-child of Thorngaek. He is a great hunter of water bears. We will get word to Lil-o telling him where he may find Naooksoak. Then, when Lil-o comes, we can trap him and take him to Fort Enterprise, and the Big White Chief will give us much money for the trapping of Lil-o.' So spoke the men of the Tahierpikmiuts among



themselves. You have heard of Lil-o, trader?"

I nodded.

"Something of a bush-loping outlaw. Word of his misdeeds goes from mouth until it would seem that he has killed more men than Naooksoak."

"Which is a lie," said Inno-potam, "for I know Lil-o well. But nevertheless Lil-o's scalp is worth much money. They were crafty, those men of the Tahierpikmiuts, those Rabbit-Tails; crafty and craven. When they found old Naooksoak roaming in a river valley near the coast, they did not dare attack him. Instead they came back to their village and cunningly talked of where the great bear was ranging.

"They knew that Anitashi would get word to Lil-o and that Lil-o would go after Naooksoak. Anitashi was daughter of none of them, but a girl captured from the Grayling-Fins. Under their very noses Lil-o was wooing her and waiting for a chance to take her away to his teepee, hid inland no man knew where. The hunters were crafty and their scheme worked. Anitashi came to Lil-o in the depths of a spruce belt. Their talk was of Naooksoak. With the black eyes of Anitashi upon him, Lil-o swore to have the claws of the bear for a necklace and the fur for a rug in the teepee when he should take Anitashi away. For him Naooksoak that had killed many men was a challenge.

"The next day Lil-o went hunting Naooksoak in the valley of the river. He found the tracks of the killer—pads as big as the mark of an egg-tailed showshoe. All day he trailed the bear, until, just before dark which fell very early, he came across tracks into which the snow was still tumbling. That was on the jagged ice plain at the point where the river gave itself to the sea.

"From the ice crags on either side of the river the Tahierpikmiut watched the chase. They had closed in till they were within a shout of Lil-o, who guessed nothing of their craft. Said they among themselves: 'Now we will take Lil-o, or what the bear does not eat of him, to the Fort and get much money. Our hunters are on all sides. He can escape neither to south or east or west, and the ice in the boiling straits is thin. If he tries to escape over the ice, it will crack, the snow upon it will become gray and he will have to come back to our spears. No man has ever found a path across the straits in Wintertime. Our men are crouched in a circle about him, distant a spear's toss from each other It is death this time for Lil-o, the lone hunter. But we must wait. It is not good to go too close to Naooksoak the killer.'

"But Anitashi had seen the man-hunt go out from the village. She knew the Rabbit Tails were too cowardly to fight another tribe or to hunt Naooksoak, and why else would forty and three men hunt in a body? She thought of their words about the great bear, of her words to Lil-o, and she guessed the truth—that she had betrayed him to the craven hunters who were seeking blood-money. She followed and watched while Lil-o hunted the bear and the Tahierpikmiuts hunted Lil-o.

"Behind a hummock near the breathing-hole of a bearded seal, Naooksoak crouched and tore at the body of a fresh kill. Lil-o crept close, scarcely three times the width of this teepee, for it was deep twilight. At his shout old Naooksoak reared up, red-jawed, red-eyed — red as this shawl, trader."

"Which you may have," I replied, "if you but hurry. Did Naooksoak or the Tahierpikmiut slay Lil-o, the lone hunter?"

With a deep bow Inno-potam folded the shawl into his tum-pack.

"Red-jawed as your gift, trader; and his wheezing breath even the hunters of the Tahierpikmiut could hear and tremble at. With another shout Lil-o flung his heavy spear. His aim was hasty and bad. The bone shaft missed the fifth rib, but stood deep in the flank of Naooksoak. Lil-o sprang upon a hummock of ice, ready with his jabbing harpoon to thrust the brute through his red jaw.

"But Naooksoak the killer, the terrible, the devil-child of Thorngaek, did not charge. The very boldness of Lil-o daunted him; it was many moons since any man had had courage to fling a spear at him. He clawed at the shaft in his flank, tore it away, whimpered and fled into the twilight. Lil-o ran after him, till the cracking ice and lead-colored snow caused him to stop."

"But," I objected, "Naooksoak was a great bear and Lil-o only a man. If the ice was so thin ——"

"Will you, then, finish the story, trader?" Inno-potam demanded resentfully.

"I borrowed my tongue from an old

woman," I confessed humbly. "It is your telling, Inno-potam. Proceed."

"When Lil-o turned from chasing the bear into the twilight, he was startled at seeing Anitashi flying over the ice toward him. She had glided through the circle of hunters unseen, because they had eyes for nothing save the fight beside the hummocks. But they sighted her before she was halfway to Lil-o. Without her warning he would have walked straight into the spears of the Tahierpikmiut who even then were running after her.

"She flung herself upon him, and in a second Lil-o had her story and his warning. To south and west and east he could see the forty and three hunters closing in. On his hummock of ice he turned like a sentinel drake and saw no escape except across the ice of the straits. They were in the jaws of the trap.

"It was Anitashi, quick of brain, who saved them both from the craven Rabbit-Trails. 'Naooksoak!' she cried. 'He lives his life on the ice. He is ice-wise. He can nose a path across the treacherous Straits. He fled toward the other shore. The hunters are afraid to follow.'

"They took the path of Naooksoak and fled before the spears of the Tahierpikmiut, who were doubly enraged at Lil-o's carrying off the girl half of them had sworn to marry. As they fled, the ice swayed and cracked around them, but they held to the dim trail of Naooksoak and disappeared in the gloom where never man had gone before save in Summertime *kayak*. As they fled Lil-o swore to kill Naooksoak and roll his head down into the village of the Tahierpikmiut. Thus, O trader, it was that we——"

"We?" I caught him. "We, we, we! Ho, Lil-o! Your tongue runs faster than your brain. Now I understand why you would not trade the claws of Naooksoak——"

A shadow, long from the fires, fell athwart the tent door. I heard the dry crunch of a shoe-pac and turned around to look. Some one was fumbling at the tent flap.

"*Hsst!*" I whispered, whirling again. "If there is a price on your head, Lil-o——"

I stopped. The tall young warrior had vanished as softly as he had come, as softly as a gray goose-feather.

THE wrinkled, fur-wrapped figure of old Opetik thrust through the door.

"The broiled moose-tongue and broth of beaver-tails awaits you in my teepee, trader," he announced, squatting beside the fire in the very spot where the lone hunter had sat but a moment before.

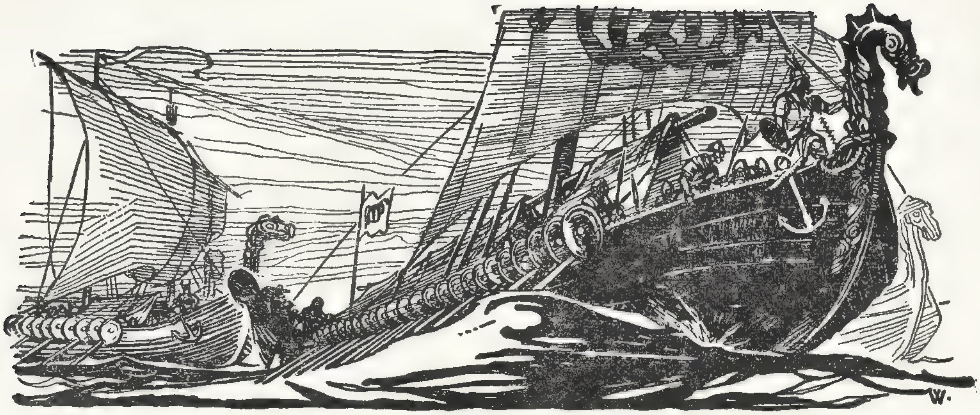
"Good," I said. "But first a question, Opetik. Now, tell me no whopper as you were telling me concerning Naooksoak not an hour ago. Did you ever hear of Lil-o, the lone hunter? A moose-bird told me he is living inland no man knows where, with a young wife. Do you know anything of him? No whopper, now."

"I speak but the truth, as always," Opetik answered in a sepulchral voice. "The moose-bird lied to you. Lil-o, whose scalp was worth money, is dead. In the last Moon of Flying Frost he went hunting Naooksoak. With him went a maiden, one black-haired Anitashi of the Tahierpikmiut. Naooksoak craftily drew them after him, feigning to run from a mere bone-shaft sting. Forty and three men saw him lure the rash Lil-o and the maiden to his ice lair. The hunters were unable to follow and save, because their fear of the white bear froze them to the spot and because, O trader, Naooksoak and his victims *walked on the very waves of the sea!* That is no whopper, this story of the death of Lil-o.

"And the next day, after eating this pair of lovers, Naooksoak came to the village of the Tahierpikmiut and lurked in a balsam clump while a snow storm raged. He plucked off his very head, trader, and rolled it down into the circle of igloos. As the Tahierpikmiut fled the accursed spot, they saw the great white bear come out, pick up his head, and set it on his shoulders again. That, also, is no whopper, but the truth."

"Like the other tales you recounted of Naooksoak," I suggested.

"Even as true as they," said Opetik solemnly.



# SWAIN FOSTRI

A Complete Novelette

by Arthur D. Howden Smith

*Author of "Swain Kingsbane," "Swain's Folly," etc.*

GRAY sky, gray sea, gray land. Greasy, steep-crested combers that heaved and toppled endlessly out of the west against the slaty rocks which lifted jagged crests toward smoky cloud wraiths overhead. And riding the waves—poised midway betwixt sea floor and sky roof—a half dozen low-waisted, crawling craft, wet hulls all green and sheeny black, oar shafts a-drip as they flashed up and down, single masts tossing crazily, dragon prows dipping and preening in a gay glitter of green, red and gold.

Foremost of the little fleet was Swain Olaf's son's great dragon *Deathbringer*, dashing the sea to foam with her sixty oars, while the men on her rowing benches chanted in harmony, the grunting refrain of the "Rowers' Song"—"*Ha! Hee! Ho! Ha-aah!*"

Erik Skallagrim's son, who was Swain's forecastleman, beat the time for the stroke on his shield; now and then a burst of song from one of the two scalds, Armod and Oddi the Little, who attended Swain, enlivened the task, or, at a word from Erik, a fresh man from those who stood on poop and forecastle took the place of a rower whose back muscles had wearied or whose hands were become tender from the oarbite.

Astern of *Deathbringer* followed another dragon and four longships, the least of them pulling twenty oars a side, and each craft crammed with men, whose shields were jammed edge to edge in the gunwale notches. Every poop showed the glimmer of mail and helm and the flare of crimson cloaks where the chiefs stood by the helmsmen.

There were full arms' chests lashed to the poop and forecastle bulkheads, and beneath the rowing benches were stowed fur sleeping bags for the carls who labored at the bucking oars. Under the gangway boards were packed barrels of ripe Orkney ale and a sufficiency of stones, both for ballast and for close work in the fighting. A stout fleet, and well-supplied.

Swain, himself, stood behind Erik, keeping an eye on all his ships, and conning the course as they drew in closer to the land. He was a tall man, but not so tall as the tallest; thick in the barrel, with a ruddy golden beard and eyes of a cold, merciless blue.

Of him it was said that he was the greatest man in all the Northern lands, albeit in station he was no more than a *bondi*—farmer—in the Orkneys. And certain it is that in his day the scalds were tireless in the chanting of his praises, notwithstanding he was one who never gave rewards for the celebrating of his deeds and would tolerate only the two scalds, Armod and Oddi, in his company. And these two, rather because of their valiance as warriors than for their scaldcraft, at which, indeed, he was accustomed ordinarily to jeer.

From his youth he had been successful

as a vikingfarer, and early won fame by reason of his feud with Olvir Rosta* who was as noted for wickedness as Swain was for honorable achievements. Olvir had been the bane of Swain's father and mother and his two brothers, while Swain had burned Olvir's grandmother, Frakork the Witch, and driven Olvir into outlawry.

Back and forth across the world the two harried one another, and a red trail they blazed, recking naught of whom they slew or injured, if the doing of it harmed the other.

Once Swain pursued Olvir to Mikligard† and compelled the Roisterer to flee the service of the Greek emperor. With Swain hard upon his heels, Olvir sailed westward beyond Irland‡ even to Greenland, and fearing that Swain would come after him there, fared on west and south to that Wineland the Good which Leif Erik's son had discovered.

Nor was his fear unjustified, for Swain followed Olvir's keel furrow to Greenland, chased him south past Furdurstrandi—the Long and Wonderful Beaches, whose silvery gleam has lured men to death by thousands—and finally ran him to ground in the forest inland from the Skraelings' Coast, where no Norsemen, save those of their companies, ever had been before.

But that tale is told elsewhere, and in this place we say only that fate cheated Swain of his vengeance again, and Olvir turned his prow eastward, with the Orkneyman astern.

Thereafterward the two enemies became involved upon opposite sides in the series of Kings' Wars which rent Norway, when the three sons of King Harald Gillichrist—King Ingi, King Sigurd and King Eystein—fell out amongst themselves and struggled to attain sole power. Swain espoused Ingi's cause, and for Ingi, who was a cripple, slew Sigurd in a street fray in front of Sigrid Saeta's tavern in Bergen, whereby he was dubbed Kingsbane. He also aided Ingi in the struggle with Eystein, and through his craft Ingi was able to secure Eystein's death at the hands of the traitor, Simon Skalp.

And when Olvir and the survivors of the chiefs who had acknowledged Sigurd and Eystein set up another opponent to Ingi in the person of the young King Hakon Herdabreid—The Broadshouldered—a son of Sigurd's by the left hand, Ingi called upon Swain once more, and but for the falling out of his two best friends in Norway, Gregorius Dag's son and Erling Skakki—Wrynecked—would have been carried a third time to victory by Swain's wily counsel and skill in battle.

But it was not to be. Erling abandoned King Ingi's part in a rage against Gregorius; Gregorius was trapped and slain through his own rashness; and in a fight against hopeless odds on the river ice near Oslo, Ingi was slain by Olvir Rosta, bearing himself bravely to the last, and Swain and the few who lived out the encounter must flee north to Bergen.

Any man other than Swain would have abandoned the contest then and returned to his lands in the Orkneys, where he was wealthy and respected; yes, where he practically ruled the domain of Jarl Harald, whom he had fostered as a youth and who never undertook to cross Swain in any matter of importance. But Swain was no man to abandon an issue in which he had concerned himself.

"This side of death a man can always be victor," he said.

He had set out to unite Norway under one king, at first, because Ingi had offered him a fitting reward, but as the war continued and waxed bitterer and more desperate his feeling changed, and the task he had assumed originally as a viking venture, an opportunity for gaining power, became an obligation of honor.

To Erling, sorrow-stricken and remorseful for the deaths of Gregorius and King Ingi, that had been brought about by Erling's readiness to listen to the foolish counsel of his wife, the Princess Kristin, Swain had summed up his attitude in these grim words:

"You have no claim upon me. You forfeited it when you allowed Ingi to march to his death. But this is the first defeat I have suffered at Olvir's hands, and I do not propose to let him enjoy his triumph any longer than I can help. Also, Ingi was a brave man and a fair comrade, and I shall not permit a king to live and reign who was his enemy. For another thing, it was Ingi's desire that there should be one king over Norway, and one king I shall make—and the best king for my purposes is your son, Magnus, who, through his mother, is grandson to King Sigurd the Jorsalafarer." *

Swain and Erling had more talk, and the end of it was that Erling agreed to put away his wife Kristin, lest she make more trouble for him and spoil his son's luck, and Swain contrived things so that the chiefs of their faction decided in favor of Magnus's claim to the crown, and awarded it to him in open Thing meeting, at the same time appointing his father Erling to be his guardian and protector, seeing Magnus was a child of five years and incapable of ordering a shieldwall or fighting a longship.

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* The Roisterer. † Constantinople. ‡ Ireland.

* Crusader.

ORKNEYAR
FRIDAREY
(Fair Isle)
about 50 miles N. of Rinansey
RINANSEY
PAPEY MEIRI
Trollhadns Kirkja
VESTREY
Hofn
Kruppisand
Vestfiord
SANDEY
KALFS
Hellisnes
FAREY
EGILSEY
PAPEY MINNI
Lyngholm
STRONSEY
VIGR
Brugh of Birsey
Birgisherad
Ellidavik
HELLISEY
Sandvik
Brugh of Deerness
Papuli
ROGNVALDSEY
SVINEY
BORBAREY
Hafn
Upland
HAEY
PETLANDSFIORD
STRAUMSEY
PETLANDS SKER
Dungalsbaer
Dungalsnes
Thorsá
Myrkhol
Thraswik
Lambaborg

After that they and their friends fled Norway for the balance of the winter, partly because they required more aid to help them in the fight they had ahead of them, and partly because otherwise Hakon might have entrapped them in Bergen and slain them one and all by the might of the multitude of housecarls he had gathered around his banner, thanks to the victory he had won and the crafty advice he had from Olvir Rosta and a certain great man of Norway named Sigurd of Reyr, who was the chief of the lendermen—nobles—who had taken the part of Broadshoulders in the struggle for the crown.

Erling and the child King Magnus and the most of the Norse chiefs loyal to them voyaged to Denmark to ask help from King Valdemar. Swain fared for the Orkneys to rouse his friends and equip his fleet. And the two parties covenanted to meet as soon as they might after the Easter season at Bergen, and launch in that town their first attempt to win back the land they had lost.

Hakon, too, was not idle. His emissaries wore their footsoles sore traversing fiorside and seaside, uplands and dales, with promises of reward for their friends and threats for their enemies. Far and wide the word sped through the North lands that in Norway the ravens would have a rich feast in the spring.

Men of all persuasions, landless men and men of property, outlaws and inlaws, rich and poor, thrall and farmer, merchant and shipman, discussed the one question around the skalli fires: Who should be king when the next winter came? And more often than not the question that followed this one was: What device has Swain hidden behind his shield?

For the Norsefolk knew Swain, and feared or admired him, according to their persuasions.

"A helm cracker, the Orkneyman, carls!"

"Ho, I wish never to face him when the shieldwalls crash or prows bite home!"

"Yes, yes, what Swain thinks the lendermen do."

"If Hakon rules, Swain plots."

"Ho, there, what news from westward? Is the Orkneyman returned?"

Men spoke so along the strands of the merchant towns from Konungahela, south in the Viken country, to Nidaros, north in Throndhjem. Everywhere they watched for Swain, honing their sword blades, refitting their spearheads, stringing their bows, furbishing their mail—eying one another askance. For who could tell in which king's array his neighbor would be on the morrow?

## II

"MEET her, carls, meet her!" rasped Swain to the steersmen who tugged at their big sweeps under the incurving dragon's tail, gasping for breath as the salt spray blanketed their nostrils.

They grinned acknowledgment, and one panted an answer—

"She is not stead broken, this beast."

"It is for you to break her," retorted Swain.

He turned to Erik, who stood at the break of the poop, balancing himself easily on the short, bowed limbs which had obtained him the nickname of "Crooked Legs." A little man was Erik, as little in stature as Oddi the scald, whom men called the Little; but Erik was tremendously broad in the shoulders and heavy of chest, where Oddi was wizened and slender, and his face was a flat brown mask, while Oddi's was a maze of wrinkles and creases, like the shell of a nut. Erik was Iceland born, and noted for his store of wise sayings, as well as for his shipcraft, weaponcraft and steadcraft.

"Well, little man," growled Swain, peering under his hand at the towering coast they neared, "I may have lost my memory, but otherwise I would say those rocks are no Bergen landfall."

"Your memory is untouched," returned Erik. "Whatever that land is, we are not in sight of the heads of Hardanger Fiord."

"*Humph!*" Swain's voice boomed from deep down in his chest. "We are far off our course, it seems. And there are not many places in Norway where we have reason to expect a welcome."

Armod, who was clinging to the weather gunwale, raised a sudden shout.

"A passage, Swain, a water passage! See! To larboard! Inside that island yonder. It looks like a fiord or river mouth."

"You are right," assented Swain, after a moment's scrutiny. "There is shelter for us, at any rate."

"And shelter we need," spoke up Erik. "Our carls are but half men after the battering they have had. St. Magnus! Three days of westerly swell and easterly gales! Whoever heard the like? Our luck has been with us so far or else we had not kept all our company."

"I am not inclined to overstrain my luck," rumbled Swain, "but we are not Hakon's folk, and if Hakon's folk are within there, why——"

"I will go ashore, and discover where we may be," volunteered Armod.

He was very tall, this scald, and reputed to be the handsomest man in Norway. He had long yellow hair and beard, silky fine. He was fastidious in his garb, affecting the Frankish fashions in gear and in speech, and he spoke with a languid drawl as if any effort was too tedious for him. But save Oddi there was no scald fit to match words with him, and in seafight or landfight no warrior could venture before him.

"No, no," denied Oddi. "If any go ashore he should be I."

"And why?" demanded Armod.

"Because, my long alehorn, your figure is marked from end to end of the land, while, I——"

"Could pass off as a thrall, no doubt," concluded Armod. "But I call to your attention that it was I who spoke first, and——"

"And I call to the attention of you both that it will be I who say who shall go or stay," interposed Swain. "I think that neither of you will have occasion to try your land legs."

They had steered around a cape which projected north from the island whose mass Armod had descried, and had had a fair view of the waters that lay betwixt it and the mainland. Swain pointed over the starboard bow at a huddle of masts that were barely discernible through the murky air far up the inlet where the storm's force was abated.

"'Friends or foes?' asked the fox when he blundered into the kennel," said Erik.

Swain's teeth showed white against the red of his beard.

"We are wolves, not foxes, little man. They must be strong mastiffs, and a numerous pack, who would pull us down."

"More numerous they are," asserted Oddi. "There are eight or ten of them, at least."

Swain nodded thoughtfully.

"Yet I do not propose to turn back," he said. "If they would fight, I believe we can render a good account of ourselves, and there is always the chance that we have stumbled upon some of our friends. Erling must have sent men ahead of him to raise folk for King Magnus."

He scowled at the rocky gray land which was closing in upon either hand.

"I should like to know where we are," he growled. "That would tell us more than aught else."

"It has the look of the Viken country to me," said Armod.

"There are houses," exclaimed Erik, "beyond the ships."

"Yes, a town," agreed Swain.

"And now I recognize it," declared Oddi. "Do you see that hill to the eastward? And the white of buildings on it? That is a farm

I have often visited. They brew a heady ale, which——"

Swain dropped a huge hand on the little scald's shoulders.

"Forget the ale," commanded the Orkneyman. "What is the town, drunkard?"

"Tunsburg."

"It is so," exclaimed Armod at once.

Erik, also, silently nodded his head.

"Tunsburg," reflected Swain. "This is not to our credit as shipmen, Icelander. We are a long way off our course for Bergen, and in the heart of our enemies' country."

"As for the enemies' country, that I grant you," replied Erik. "But who could have reckoned a sure course, tossed about as we were, and without sight of star or sun for three days on end? I say again we are fortunate to be here."

"Fortunate or unfortunate, the future must prove," growled Swain in his gruff way. "Open up those arms' chests, and serve out bows and spears. Bid the rowers don their mail. Relieve them, all of you who are boun.[*] If we must fight we shall be ready."

He lifted his voice in a roar of command to the dragon next astern, and bellowed similar instructions to its captain, Kolbiorn Jon's son, telling Kolbiorn likewise to pass them on to the following craft, which were beginning to round the cape into the quieter waters under the island's lee.

Men scrambled along the gangway, the relieving crew watching their opportunities to slip into the benches by tens, so that at no time would the ship lose her weigh; and as fast as the relieved oarsmen gained the open spaces forward and aft they fell to buckling on their armor, clapped helms on head, snatched up shields and weapons and ran to their fighting stations, spearmen, axmen and swordsmen on poop and forecastle, bowmen the length of the gangway, prepared to cover the rowers who crouched low on the benches under the protection of the gunwale shields.

IN the meantime, too, the shipping by the town commenced to boil with activity. Small boats plied back and forth from the strand, and the piers became black with folk. Horsemen could be seen flogging their steeds up the shore paths, and knots of helms showed in clearings here and there, evidently hastening toward Tunsburg.

"We have stirred a hornets' nest," commented Erik.

Swain, who had been staring with a puzzled expression at the vessels in front of them, paid no attention to this remark.

"Ho, scalds," he exclaimed, "that is a strange longship which lies nearest us. By the Hammer, I never saw her like—in these waters. She has the build of those vast buses and dromonds we saw in the Greek emperor's fleet at Mikligard. Do you remember?"

"I do, indeed," rejoined Oddi. "And what is more, Swain, she is no longship. There! Her folk are thrusting out the oars; there are three rows, one above the other. The Greeks used such ships——"

"She is what the Greeks called a trireme," interrupted Armod. "We used to marvel how they pulled all the oars without confusion. How came she here? Hakon had no craft like her that I ever heard of."

"She is not Hakon's," snapped Swain. "*Humph!* This is a coil. She must carry as many carls as three of our dragons. I am of a mind to have a closer look at her."

"Her folk are of the same mind," said Erik. "Here she heads."

"And her spawn behind her," added Oddi as the huddle of strange hulls and masts dissolved into an orderly line of ships.

" 'When the packs meet, teeth click,' " quoted Swain. "But dog and dog may bark peacefully at each other. Ho, Kolbiorn!" he hailed *Seascraper* astern. "Bide as you are. I go forward to see who is in Tunsburg before us."

Kolbiorn sprang to his poop gunwale, a dark, sober-faced man, trader turned viking.

"Not alone, Swain!" he protested. "There are ten ships against you."

"By myself I can perhaps avoid a fight—which, I am bound to say, I should prefer," replied Swain. "Also, it is possible they are friends. If I require aid from you, however, I will hoist my war shield to the masthead."

WHEN *Deathbringer* left her companions and came on alone the enormous bus preceding the Tunsburg ships made signal to her consorts and they lay on their oars and permitted her to continue without them.

"Here are others not so keen for battle," remarked Swain. "I hope these are not

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[*] Equipped.

Erling's friends. I should be ill pleased to think our folk were so loath at the weaponwork."

"Nevertheless, I begin to think they are friends," declared Oddi. "I have seen that gilt helm on the trireme's poop before this day. Holy Magnus, how it flames, even in this light!"

Armod started abruptly.

"You have said it, Oddi!" proclaimed the tall scald. "Mark his strut as he paces the deck. Yes, yes, many's the time we have seen that helm in other days."

"If you mean Eindride Ungi,"[*] said Swain skeptically, "he is no nearer than Mikligard."

"Who?" asked Erik curiously. "Eindride Ungi, who commands the Varangian guards of the Greek emperor?"

"Yes, he," insisted Oddi. "I would swear to that helm on any deck."

"And better still, I will take oath to that strut of Eindride's," cried Armod. "He is as vain as the peacocks in the emperor's gardens."

Swain frowned without answering, but Erik wagged his head in vigorous dissent.

"It would never be Eindride," said the forecastleman. "Why, Swain got him a fat office under the emperor when we were in Mikligard after Olvir these many years gone. What would fetch Eindride home, where he will be no more than one among many lendermen?"

"Vanity, as like as not," said Swain suddenly. "The scalds are in the right again, Erik. That is Eindride. The fool could not keep away from Norway when crowns were tumbling. He would have told himself that his chance was as good as another's."

Swain's savage laugh rang across the narrowing gap beyond which the trireme was lashing the water with her hundred and fifty oars. Eindride heard it, and leaped to the gilded stern of his vessel, a gorgeous figure in chased and gilded pantzer suit[†] with crested golden helm, a gold and crimson cloak fluttering from a jeweled broach at his throat.

This Eindride was a young son of a good family in the Viken district, who had gone to Mikligard in the service of the Greek emperor, as has been said, and later, had accompanied Swain on that voyage in pursuit of Olvir Rosta which was celebrated in the Northern lands as "Swain's Chase." He was a brave fellow, but so vain that any crafty-witted adversary could twist him around a spearshaft and, but for Swain, Olvir Rosta would have ruined him upon a time Eindride's interests had clashed with the Roisterer's. Men called him Weathercock.

"Who laughs at Eindride Ungi?" he shouted now.

"Swain Olaf's son laughed," roared Swain. "But it is for you to say whether I laughed with you or at you, Eindride."

"Well met, Swain!" cried Eindride. "It has been years since we encountered. I could wish we were on the same side of the shieldwall, though."

"Ho," answered Swain. "Are we enemies, then?"

"If what I hear be true."

"And what is that?"

THE two vessels had drawn within arrowshot, and, a wave of the hand from their commanders brought each to a gradual stop, the oars drifting idly in the lather of their wakes. They lay almost broadside to one another.

Eindride hesitated.

"Why, all men say you hold for Magnus Erling's son," he said finally.

"I hold for King Magnus," assented Swain with the faintest emphasis. "Are you well advised, Eindride, to take sides so speedily when you are new come from the South?"

"I am a Vikenman," retorted Eindride. "And my friends in the country are for Hakon."

"For Hakon, eh? I thought Hakon's strength lay in the north, in the Throndhjem dales."

Eindride laughed jeeringly.

"It is plainly to be seen that you, too, are new come from oversea, Swain. Tunsburg is Hakon's town."

"So you tell me," derided Swain.

"Come ashore with me, and you shall meet the king, himself," promised Eindride. "He holds Tunsburg today—he and Olvir Rosta."

Swain dug his fingers in his beard, considering. This was grave news, news of the utmost consequence. How best to capitalize it?

"And Sigurd of Reyr?" he asked presently. "Is he here, too? They are doughty enemies, Eindride, and honorable in the bargain, as I have always testified."

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[*] The younger. [†] Plate mail.

"No," said Eindride, "we do not leave all our eggs in the one basket. Sigurd is in Konungahela, and however Erling comes at us we shall be in position to withstand him and bring his efforts to naught."

"*Humph,*" muttered Swain in his beard. "It might also be said that he who divides his eggs divides his care of them, and if he brings one basket home whole the other is likely to be smashed."

But aloud he said only:

"Hakon is a young man, and like all young men a brisk walker. He covers much ground. But I am amazed that you have seen fit to throw in your lot with Hakon, whose chief supporter is Olvir Rosta, who is my enemy and has been your's, as well."

Eindride looked somewhat uncomfortable.

"Oh, Olvir has paid me a handsome fine for the harm he wrought against me in Mikligard," he said, "and he has stood my friend with King Hakon, so we are quits on our account."

"He is a handsome promiser," answered Swain. "Did he pay all his fine in hand?"

"A part, and the rest——"

Swain chuckled.

"You will never see the rest. But even if you did, I might remind you that I was once the best friend you possessed, and if you enjoy any wealth it is because I aided you."

"Whatever aid you rendered me was with intent to help yourself, Swain," he puffed. "That score is wiped clean."

"There are two views of that question," rejoined Swain. "Well, Eindride, if I may not induce you to join my company I must be off."

"Not so fast; not so fast," protested Eindride. "There are two views of that question, also. I can not permit an enemy of Hakon's to come in and look at us and run away."

"Ha," said Swain. "What can you permit, Eindride? Your position is a highly honorable one, I perceive. You must sell the old friend to the new, as the peddler said."

"You were never any man's friend, except for what you might wring from him," exclaimed Eindride furiously. "Take my advice, and yield yourself to my mercy. That barge of your's can not front this ship for a dozen sword-strokes."

"Yes, it is a mighty ship," admitted Swain seriously. "You must have a lusty band to man those oars."

"Never mind our rowing benches," boasted Eindride. "We have Serkland* thralls for them. My folk—" he waved his sword arm toward the trireme's congested waist—"are free for the weaponwork. They do not have to row and fight, as your crew must."

Swain tugged at his beard again.

"That is a valuable plan," he agreed. "It may be we shall come to it yet in the north. But I doubt it. Thralls are hard to come by, and those we acquire are most valuable in tilling the farms. Well, well! You are much stronger than we."

He half turned to Erik, and added from one side of his mouth:

"Dip oars, when I call, Icelander! Smartly! Ready, spearmen, bowmen!"

Eindride answered him, without noting the slight surge of excitement that rippled *Deathbringer's* crew.

"Yes, we are by far the stronger, Swain, and I can easily carry those other ships of your's lurking under the island's lee, for beside the ships with me King Hakon has a score more in the shipyards beyond the docks. You can not flee me, even if you would, for the seas outside would swamp you. Cast down your sword, and I will speak a good word for you in Hakon's ear."

"Are you ready, Erik?" growled Swain aside as he pretended to reflect upon this offer. "At the helmsmen, carls—and that fool in the crimson cloak! Topple them, and the thralls in the trireme's bowels will not know what to do."

And to Eindride he replied—

"You might induce Hakon to accept a favorable fine from me instead of the ax, but I think Olvir would bid against you."

Eindride shrugged his shoulders.

"Some chance a man must take, Swain. But you overrate Olvir's influence. There is none so high in Hakon's favor as I, seeing that he and all his folk know that my trireme is the surest tool we possess to wreck damage to Magnus's folk."

"That is a point we will now settle," said Swain. "Loose, bowmen! Cast, spearmen!"

A howl of glee echoed up from *Deathbringer's* decks. A howl of anguish answered from the trireme. *Hiss-sststl* went the arrow hail. *Swiss-sshl* sang the spears. Eindride dropped with a spear through the thick of his thigh. Two of the trireme's helmsmen were dead; one tugged at an arrow that had pierced both cheeks; the fourth was pinned to the gunwale by a spear through the arm. A third of the folk on the poop were slain or wounded. And spears and arrows continued to rain upon them. The clumsy vessel fell off by the head, with a frantic, ill-timed splashing of oars.

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* Saracen.

"Oars, Erik!" cried Swain. "Larboard, steersmen! Closer! Closer! Into her oarbank—so!"

*Deathbringer*, answering the thrust of her steering sweeps, swung in toward the trireme's helpless bulk, gathering weigh with extraordinary rapidity as her rowers bent to their task. A dozen men, perceiving Swain's intent, ran to the steering sweeps, but they hampered themselves by their numbers, and the growing confusion among the rowing benches, buried from sight below decks, neutralized what efforts they could make.

The Norse dragon lurched into the larboard oarbanks of the trireme like a battering ram, her sharp prow smashing the oar staves to splinters or pushing them inboard, so that they shot like projectiles across the cramped area of the rowing benches, knocking men right and left. A wail went up from the oar thralls, and they flung themselves flat on the bank decks, struggling to break free of their chains or to gain cover under the benches.

The trireme spun helplessly to starboard under the impact of the dragon's blow, and Swain's folk raked her decks in passing, rounding under her stern and continuing the torment as *Deathbringer* ranged back along her starboard side.

Erik waved to the helmsmen to close in, and break through the starboard oar banks but Swain checked him.

"No, no, little man. We have done enough. His friends astern are coming up."

"Let us fight them all," answered Erik sturdily. "We are six ships—and Orkneymen!"

"Brave words," said Swain with a rare chuckle. "But I have other deeds to do. And the news that peacock tossed us will be as good as red gold in Erling's hand. I begin to see how we shall go about the establishment of Magnus' kingship."

He stepped to the break of the poop, and called down to the sweating rowers:

"You folk at the oars had the luck this day. You showed that the longship could beat Eindride's floating castle, and the scalds will celebrate what you did for years to come."

"Our muscles and your wit, Swain," called back a man from the larboard benches.

And as the laughter died away, Oddi said:

"Let the folk make a saying of it!

"Swain's wit,
Rowers' grit.

"Yet I do not see how we can improve our lot by venturing outside, where the storm is like to finish us, Swain."

"The man who slays a bear with his knife can slay his next bear weaponless," rejoined Swain. "If we perish, we perish. But we must put to sea, and carry the word to Erling that his foes have split their forces."

Erik nodded approval.

"There is a time to fight and a time to flee. Also, it is my belief that the storm is blowing itself out."

Swain hailed Kolbiorn as *Deathbringer* ran up beside *Seascraper*.

"We have tidings for Erling, carl, that drive us to sea again."

"So it is not fear of Hakon's knaves, I care not," replied Kolbiorn.

"We carry with us what shall yet be the bane of Hakon's folk," said Swain. "And now that we are sailing away from the land and northward we can hoist sails. I doubt if Eindride's ships will follow us."

"That weathercock!" rasped Erik.

"It is the worst luck for Hakon to have Eindride in his company," said Armod. He was always more dangerous to his friends than to his enemies."

"He is too dangerous to live," scowled Swain. "A man who is your friend one year, and turns from you later! Bah! The ax to his throat! Why, he was Erling's shieldmate, as well as mine. And now he fights beside Olvir Rosta! That is enough for me.

"In oars, carls! Let the wind work for us."

"Which is more than Eindride's folk will do," exclaimed Oddi. "They have had enough of this swell already. See! They turn back."

## III

ALL the folk in Bergen were on the strand to watch Swain's sea-battered ships sail up Hardanger Fiord to the king's docks, and no less did Swain's carls throng their gunwales to observe the signs of Erling's success: A swarm of armored men on the piers, thirty or more fine longships and dragons at anchor, and the evident friendship of the townfolk, pressed close behind Erling's troops.

"It is like the old times when Ingi was king," exclaimed Armod. "There are the scarlet cloaks of the guards on the pier under the smithy shops."

"That man on horseback in their midst must be Erling," said Oddi. "He has somewhat on his saddlebow before him. That would be Magnus, I suppose."

"Yes, it is a babe or a swaddling," agreed Erik, his hawk's eyes fixed on the splendid picture. "As you say, Armod, it is like the old times. Ingi used to sit so on his horse, with his guards around him, when we sailed in after the spring gales to join his banner."

"But there is this difference," put in Oddi merrily. "In those times the king on the horse was a cripple, seeing that Ingi had a hump to his back and a twisted foot, and now the king is a child still tied to the bower."

"A difference, yet not such a difference," growled Swain, speaking for the first time. "A cripple king and a child king, each must have others lead his troops and fight his battles. But I do Ingi an injustice in those words. It is true he was of small account in his body, but he had a warrior's spirit, and no man will forget that he met his doom in the shieldwall on a stricken field, with his war-cry on his lips. This child will be of even less account, since he can not have developed any spirit or sense at so young an age."

"It might be said that you do not sound as if you entertained great hopes for the future, Swain," said Erik slyly.

"I shall not worry about the future if Erling will heed my counsel," answered Swain. "Starboard, helmsmen! We turn in here. They have saved us ship space at the king's pier."

Erling rode forward as *Deathbringer* nosed into the slip, the child king perched on the saddle in front of him, curious round eyes shifting eagerly from ship to shore and back again, while the assembled warriors raised a thunderous war shout, with rumbling of ludr-horns and shrill outcries from the townfolk.

Swain gave a parting order to Erik, bidding him see to the mooring of the other ships and keep the crews aboard—"as it is my opinion we shall not be here long enough to give them drinking time in the taverns—" and leaped to the pier three ells distance from the gunwale, with all his mail on his back.

"A warm greeting, Swain," called Erling, leaning from the saddle to offer his hand. And with a merry twinkle added, "This is one occasion upon which I was first at our meeting place, it seems."

ERLING was a tall man and strongly made, with high shoulders and a short neck, which was twisted upon one side by an old wound he had received in a seafight what time he had fared with Swain to Mikligard in pursuit of Olvir Rosta, and it was from the circumstance of this wound that he was nicknamed Skakki.

His complexion was light, and his hair of a sandy color, beginning to turn gray. His features were very ugly, sharp and thoughtful in cast, and his manner was agreeable. In his character he was distinguished by overcaution, albeit no man in Norway might challenge his personal bravery or his skill in battle once he was committed to action, and a tendency up to this time to attach undue importance to the opinion of his wife, the Princess Kristin, who was largely the cause of the trouble between him and King Ingi and Gregorious, which, as has been told, had resulted in the deaths of these two, and the accession to the crown of Magnus.

It might be suspected that Erling had consciously planned that matters should fall out in just this fashion, in order to advance his son; but the contrary was true. He would have been satisfied had Ingi lived to consolidate the kingdom, since the crippled king had no son, and was inclined to favor Magnus to succeed himself. Now, Magnus had come to the throne in the face of strong opposition; the Thingmen who elected the child had fled at once before Hakon's host; and Erling and Magnus and the principal of their followers had been obliged to spend the winter in Denmark.

As the scalds afterward said, no king ever became king under less favorable conditions than Magnus Erling's son—and as to the luck he had, it was more the work of Swain than any other man.

As Swain accepted Erling's hand on the pier he ignored the twinkle in his friend's eye; his gaze was fastened upon the boy king's face, plumbing the soft curves of cheek and jaw, the liquid depths of the eyes, for indications of the budding character that should give them their final mold.

"Well, youngling," he said, without answering Erling, "what do you think of this being king?"

The boy stared back at him with equal curiosity.

"I like it," answered a treble voice. "I have many valiant warriors about me, and there are always brave tales to hear from them."

"Ho," grinned Swain. "It seems that you are inclined to the weapon work!"

"That I am," boasted Magnus. "Wait until I have my growth, and I will fare with you, Swain. We will be vikings together after we have won the kingdom."

"Yes," agreed Swain, still grinning, "after we have won the kingdom!"

"But where have you been these spring months?" asked the boy. "We have waited two weeks for you here in Bergen."

"I was late boun," rejoined Swain. "As you can see, I have brought six ships with with me and a few score steel eaters. Also, we had evil weather on the eastward voyage."

Erling, who had listened to this conversation with amusement, now spoke again.

"Yes, you are late, Swain. We have had the first bicker here."

"Was there fighting?" answered Swain.

"Nothing serious. We slew Arne Brigdarskalle, who held the town for Hakon, and a dozen or two of his carls; but the townfolk were glad to have us back. All has gone well, saving only that I was concerned for you. Hakon was in Throndhjem after Easter, with all the ships he took from Ingi at Oslo, and he held a Thing in Nidaros and had himself formally proclaimed king."

"Any man can be proclaimed king," scoffed Swain.

"True. He also advanced many men to higher rank, and among others he made Sigurd of Reyr Jarl of Viken. And then he disappeared seaward, where I do not know. I have had a strict lookout kept, thinking he might be planning a surprize attack upon us."

"He and Sigurd went south to secure Sigurd's Jarldom," said Swain.

Erling straightened in his saddle, and the other chiefs who had come up to hear what was being said looked their surprize.

"How can you know that, Swain!" protested Erling. "You are just arrived from the west."

"I was storm-driven into Tunsburg," replied Swain.

"Why did you not say as much?"

"You gave me no chance to," growled the Orkneyman. "You were so proud of having slain Arne and his folk. Well, it is true that you drew first blood, but I think we performed a more notable exploit than you did."

The chiefs crowded closer.

"What exploit do you mean?" questioned Erling, bewildered.

"We fought with Eindride Ungi's trireme—"

"Eindride Ungi! He is in Mikligard."

"No, he has come north and cast in his fortunes with Hakon."

"Ill news!" muttered Erling.

The boy king stirred restlessly in front of his father.

"What is a trireme, Swain?" he asked.

Swain surveyed the ships along the strand, and finally pointed to an English bus.

"Somewhat like that, Kingling, but larger and higher in the sides, and she has three rows of oars, one above another."

"And you fought with her!" cried the treble voice shrilly. "How did you escape?"

"Did you have sore manscathe?" challenged Erling.

"Such a craft must be like the great rockborgs in Valland," * exclaimed one of the near-by chiefs.

"One at a time," said Swain gruffly. "As to escaping, we dealt our blow and were away without difficulty. We lost no men. And it is well said that Eindride's ship is like a castle. That is the trouble with it. It is so big, and it has so many rowers—and they all thralls—that it is like a fat man in armor who contends with a swift-footed bowman. I would rather be the bowman, naked, than the fat man, armored.

"But our fight with the trireme was not so important as the tidings I wrung from that fool Eindride. He told us that Hakon was in Tunsburg, with a part of his forces, while Sigurd of Reyr was east in Konungahela. They think to be ready for you, whichever way you come into the Viken country, and if you will be guided by me you will not disappoint them. With their forces united, they might be too strong for us.

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* Southern France.

Divided, I do not see why we can not rout one or the other, with a little skill."

"Would it not be safer policy to fare north and establish ourselves in Nidaros?" asked Erling doubtfully. "We have friends in the Throndhjem dales who would join the banner if they had encouragement."

"The way to harm your enemy is to attack him," growled Swain. "Defeat Hakon, and you will have no trouble persuading your friends to join you. It will be Hakon who must travel light, and you who can afford to pick and choose your following."

"True talk," cried a score of chiefs who overheard.

And men commenced to drum on their shields with sword hilts or spearshafts.

"It is in my mind," continued Swain, "that Hakon and his chiefs, by some mischance, have not heard of your coming hither. It is likely they left Nidaros before their friends carried word north, and there has not yet been time to get the word back into Viken. Therefore they are looking for you to come from the south. My advice is that you should embark every man you can depend upon, and sail with this afternoon's tide."

"Which one would you strike at?" temporized Erling. "Hakon or Sigurd?"

"When you attack a king strike at his person," replied Swain. "If, by chance, you slew him, that would be as good as a score of chance onfalls."

"We should stake all we have on this issue," said Erling. "If Hakon beat us——"

"He will not beat *me*," snarled Swain.

"No, no," laughed the boy King Magnus, wiggling with excitement, so that he almost fell from his father's horse, "Hakon will not beat Swain. Bethink you, father, it was you told me Swain had never been beaten when he had folk he might depend upon in his shieldwall."

Arne Ingerid's son, who was mother's son to King Ingi that was dead and notable among the chiefs that fought under Erling's banner shouldered his way through the jam of lendermen on the pier end.

"We waste time, Erling," he called. "Swain has the right of it. We are, indeed, fortunate, if our luck has afforded us an opportunity to strike Hakon when his folk are divided. Lose no time in moving or we may be too late. You must bear in mind that it was in the Viken country Hakon won his victory and slew Ingi, and if we do the like by him there all the eastward folk will flock to us."

"Yes, yes," shouted the chiefs.

And the clamor spread to the warriors and the townfolk on the strand, until the air shook with the roar of voices and the drumming of shields.

"If Hakon is divided, then we are not," said Erling.

He smiled.

"I might have known that with your coming the sword music would be heard, Swain. And I must laugh at myself when I think that I fancied I could mock you for being late at our meeting place. Late you may have been, but you wrought profitably on your way.

"Well, well, we are gone past words. Let us try deeds. Hakon will outnumber us considerably, but we are a goodly company, with many warriors of great merit, and we have Swain's wit to aid us.

"Ships, carls, ships! He who is last boun shall buy the ale with which we celebrate our victory!"

"Skoal, Magnus's folk!" roared the chiefs in answer. "Out swords, carls! Ships! Ships!"

"*Humph*," growled Swain. "I hear the beating of the Valkyrs' wings. There will be rich meat for the war birds before many suns have set."

## IV

OUTSIDE the king's skalli the ludrhorns were rumbling; the Bergen streets resounded with the clank and rattle of marching men; the cobbled ways clattered to the jouncing of the carts that bore the ale barrels and food chests down to the piers; and through the medley of noises dinned the battering of the mallets of the shipmen, finishing the last jobs necessary to make the ships ready for sea.

Erling and Swain sat in a small chamber off the hall of the skalli, a low-raftered room, with a window looking out over the town and the haven. The little King Magnus was sprawled on the floor rushes, playing with a brace of puppies.

"We shall be late boun," said Erling, draining his ale horn the while Swain gnawed at a joint of meat, "but no doubt you are right in pushing off without waiting longer light."

"Past doubt, I am right," answered

Swain. "I tell you, every hour counts. Well, what luck did you have in Denmark? I see you have ships and folk to man them, and that means gold and silver. But what did you pay for them? Promises?"

Erling's face clouded.

"No, Swain. Valdemar is a shrewd fellow. Promises he listened to, but always put by. He would have more solid stuff than that."

"What?" demanded Swain shortly.

"Why, we talked together many days, and always he was willing to agree to do aught which might be necessary to place my son on the throne But I might never shake him from his price "

"A man must have his price," said Swain.

"Yes. And Valdemar's was the Viken country, north to Rygiarbit."

"A fat price," commented Swain drily. "He is a notable bargainer, this Dane king."

"Oh, I would not have you think that I yielded to him tamely," replied Erling quickly. "But naught else would he take. He always came back to it, saying that his ancestors, Harold Gorm's son and Svein Forked-Beard had possessed it."

"By force of arms," amended Swain.

"He will get it through me by the same means," answered Erling, "for we go to win it this day, and by force of the arms he has enabled me to obtain."

"*Humph*," growled Swain. And after a pause—

"A promise forced is not a promise kindly given. Perhaps——"

"It is more than a promise, Swain," interrupted Erling uncomfortably. "The clerks wrote out a treaty, and we signed and sealed it before witnesses."

"By the old gods," cursed Swain in a voice that shook the room walls and brought the boy king, staring, to his knees. "This passes reason! That we should be undertaking this venture today for the benefit of Valdemar! I like it not, Erling. You were ill advised."

"What was I to do?" countered Erling, more uncomfortably than ever. "The time was passing. I was to meet you here two weeks gone. I dared not wait to bargain longer. For every week that passed gave Hakon the more opportunity to strengthen his grip upon the country."

"The harm is done," said Swain gloomily. "A treaty! Bah, I never liked any matter a clerk had his finger in. But we do not have to cross this ford at once. It can wait until later. Then——"

He tossed his bone to one of the puppies and broke off, peering out of the window at the busy town.

"What, then, Swain?" cried the boy on the floor. "Will you go, and fight with Valdemar? I would go with you!"

"Proper spirit, youngling," chuckled Swain. "You are fit to stand in Ingi's shoes."

"Ingi was a cripple," said the boy petulently. "My back is straight."

Swain regarded him seriously.

"Never permit any man to belittle Ingi to you, boy," he said. "For if the king's body was pindling and twisted, his spirit was a champion's. Many is the talk I have had with him in this room, and never did I find him loath for the fray or unwilling to perform his share of the weaponwork. If he had been less anxious to stand with stronger men he would be here with us now, and you would not be king. Yes, what you are, you owe to him."

"And what Ingi was, in large measure, he owed to you, Swain," said Erling.

"He was a proper warrior," pursued Swain, ignoring the interruption. "If this boy becomes his like, with a strong body to make his spirit count, we shall have a proper king as well as a proper warrior, and that will be good for the land."

"To become a proper warrior a child must have rigorous training and a good example," said Erling. "As you know, Swain, it is the custom to give a son a foster father, largely for this purpose, seeing that flesh and blood can yield over-softly to flesh and blood. How say you? Are you of a mind to add Fostri to the other names the scalds have given you? Honors, I know well, have come to you frequently, but you have not yet fostered a king."

Swain reached out a big arm, and plucked Magnus from the floor rushes by the scruff of his neck, much as a child picks up a kitten.

"Stand here," he bade gruffly, planting the boy betwixt his knees and bending the icy fire of his blue eyes upon the chubby face.

Magnus stared back unwinking, nor did he complain of the numbing pain that Swain's fingers had caused in his neck, and if he choked twice, it was because he was something more than half strangled.

"I can not afford to foster a weakling," Swain went on. "And a weak king is a poor king. *Humph!*"

His hand darted out again, and bit into the tender flesh of the boy's arm. Tears came in the brown eyes, but Magnus blinked them back, and returned Swain's stare, without quivering.

The Orkneyman loosed his grip, and pushed the little king away with a pat a bear might have given its cub.

"He will do," he said. "But if I am to foster him, Erling, I will have no interference. Not from you or from any other. You may keep him with you in battle and on the march, but his training will be as I order it."

"That is reasonable," assented Erling.

"What of his mother?" demanded Swain. "I will have naught to do with her, nor shall she interfere with him."

"She is in Denmark. I left her there. The court life amuses her, and I promised you——"

Erling hesitated.

"To put her away," scowled Swain. "Well, have you done so?"

"As good as done so. She knows she will never have a welcome from me in Norway."

"*Humph!* That is good. But what is more important, she will have a still colder welcome from me if she ever fares hither. I know a nunnery in the Syllingar,* which is nigh the world's end, where I buried the woman who was my wife for a space; and there we could put Kristin out of all harm's way, should she endeavor to cause trouble for you again."

"She will not, Swain," Erling assured him uneasily. "And there is this to be said in her behalf. She is intent upon Magnus' achieving full power here, and to that end she will work for us at Valdemar's court, regardless of her hatred for you."

"And for yourself, too, I doubt not," snapped Swain. "She may be useful, though. For I tell you frankly, I am not of a mind to pay Valdemar his price, treaty or no treaty. A king of Norway, who had Danish housecarls in Viken, would not be king in Norway. And I should be a poor foster father to Magnus did I suffer his dominions to be hacked up in that fashion and outland troops stationed in his doorway. But that is a difficulty to solve in its proper order. I hear the horns grunting louder, and that must mean the fleet is ready for us. Come, fosterling, we will make a warrior of you, and win back the Viken country to show Valdemar that when we undertake a task we are likely to accomplish it."

## V

SWAIN managed the voyage so that King Magnus' fleet came up to Tunsburg in the early morning before King Hakon's folk were awake, and the first warning Broadshoulders had of it was the shouting of men aboard his ships along the strand, who perceived the hostile longships rowing through the haze in the fiord.

The horns blew in the streets, and the troops gathered at their meeting places quickly enough; but before they could be embarked Swain had seized a number of Hakon's vessels that lay at anchor some distance from the shore.

As it chanced, too, Eindride Ungi had put to sea several days previously, as soon as he could repair the damage Swain had done him, indeed, swearing that he would not rest until he had laid himself ship to ship with the Orkeneyman; and the long and the short of it was that, albeit Hakon had more men than Swain and Erling, he had fewer ships and he and his chiefs were wary of testing their fortune afloat.

They held a hasty counsel on one of the piers, where the dragon *Baekisudin* was berthed; she had been King Ingi's, and Hakon was wont to sail in her. This Hakon was a young king and a valiant, pleasant spoken with all men, forward in the fighting, with the figure of a true warrior, and he was always for accepting an honorable challenge.

"My judgment is that we should shove off, and give battle to Erling," he said. "It is evident that he is not inclined to come ashore against us."

"We folk have never had any luck on the water," said Onund Simon's son, a great lenderman of the Throndhjem district.

"It is time our luck changed," cried the king.

"No, no," said Olvir Rosta. "I advise that you should show caution, Lord King. I recognize Swain Olaf's son's dragon *Deathbringer* out there in the fiord, and where Swain is you may rely upon encountering a crafty foe."

Hakon raised his head proudly.

"Your words spur me to sea, Olvir," he

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* Scilly Isles.

replied. "Swain, as you say, is a crafty foe, and he has always had the better of us afloat; but the last time we met, on the river ice at Oslo, he was not ashamed to show us his back. It may be we shall have equal good fortune today."

"I do not see why that should not fall out, King," admitted Olvir. "Yet it is only the part of caution to remember that we are separated from Jarl Sigurd, who has a good half of our folk with his banner, while Eindride is absent with several thousand more stout carls."

"My view is the same as Olvir's," remarked Onund, and other chiefs expressed similar approval.

"What would you do, then?" demanded the king. "We can not flee from Swain without losing our honor, for we have here at least as many folk as he and Erling can muster."

"We are the more numerous, I believe," returned Olvir promptly. "And the best way for us to make use of our superiority is in fighting ashore. I advise that we should bide where we are in the town, and leave it to Swain to come against us here."

"But will he?"

"He must for the sake of his own honor. It is one thing to seize a handful of ships; it is another thing to attack a town held by such an array as ours. But if he sails away without coming to a weapon clash he will have lost more than he gained by his venture."

"It is not like Swain to suffer himself to be placed at a disadvantage," commented Hakon.

"Swain is no smarter than other men," retorted Olvir with a trace of heat. "He succeeds because he is willing to wait until his foes commit some foolishness which gives him an opening for victory."

"He is up to some trick now," called Onund, pointing down the fiord, where lay Erling's fleet clustered about the captured ships. "What is that vessel they are working on?"

All the men around King Hakon stared with interest at the knot of shipping.

"It is the bus we carried the king's horses in," said one of the chiefs.

"But they will not use horses to attack us from the sea," objected Onund.

"The horses are all ashore," said King Hakon. "They seem to be tossing timbers into the hold from the other vessels."

"Those two longships astern of her have taken cables from her on to their forecastles," added Olvir, stroking his beard. "And now they begin to move this way. They drift with the tide. This is strange, Lord King. The bus seems to tow the longships, and the rest of them follow her."

Hakon smiled grimly.

"It is likely that you spoke too soon when you said that Swain was no smarter than other men," he jeered. "Make no mistake, Olvir, we shall be put to it to defend what we possess, for there is no man in the north who is more to be feared than Swain, if he has folk with him he can trust."

Olvir scowled blackly. He was a black carl, this. Swart-skinned, eyes like polished black agates peering out of the black brush of beard that masked his face. Men called him a warlock, and it is certain that his grandmother, Frakork, who had the rearing of him, was a witch, as also, that he had dwelt with the Laps and practised the sorcery they affected.

But above all else, he was a disciple of wickedness. Evil he loved for its own sake, and he could match craft of a kind with Swain's—courage, too, although he was no man to match weapons with a stronger foe, unless he must.

"That is to be seen," he snarled. "I do not fear Swain, however the rest of you may, and——"

"Be careful," flashed the young king. "No man tells me I fear another!"

Olvir clicked his teeth together.

"I was at fault," he apologized suavely. "Yet heed me when I say that you do ill to weaken your resolution by anticipating what——"

"Smoke!" cried Onund. "See the smoke!"

"The bus is afire!" cried others. "They draw her back! No, she comes forward! Her people are leaving her."

Hakon frowned.

"This is peculiar," he said. "Why should they destroy a rich prize?"

"To mask their attack," snapped Olvir. "The smoke is spreading. Their ships will be cloaked by it, and so they can come up close to the piers and sweep the strand with their arrows."

"It is a clever device," exclaimed the king. "Well, we know what to meet. Order up the townsfolk. We must have plenty of carls in line to fight a landing. They may approach unseen, but they cannot land unseen."

"As Olvir has said," Onund spoke up, "if Swain and Erling land they must meet us on less than even terms. What difference can a cloud of smoke make when we are half again as numerous as they?"

"All will be well if the townfolk stand firm," muttered Olvir.

"How?" asked Hakon.

"We shall do very well if the townfolk stand firm," repeated Olvir.

"Is it that you are losing confidence?" mocked the king.

"I am not losing confidence," replied Olvir, "but it occurs to me that we who fight here shall be laboring in behalf of Jarl Sigurd, who is not present to defend his own jarldom. It is not a pleasing task to risk life and limb for another man's wealth."

"Such words do not confer honor upon you," rebuked the king. "You were very confident a moment since."

"If it was an open fight, yes," answered Olvir. "But King Eystein used to say, 'when Swain contrives, the devil drives.' "

"You are in a bad humor," said King Hakon disapprovingly. "We will go to our posts."

## VI

WHEN Swain saw that Magnus had more ships than were berthed at the Tunsburg piers he made up his mind that Hakon's folk would refuse to risk battle on the fiord, and rowing closer to Erling's ship he called to him, advising that they should drive home their attack.

"It is true that we shall be at a disadvantage if we go away from here after achieving no more than we have so far, Swain," answered Erling. "But nevertheless it appears to me we should be guilty of foolish conduct if we threw our folk against the array I see ashore."

"To drain an ale barrel you need not suck from the butt," returned Swain. "We have taken a horse transport that is full of straw. How if we filled her hold with wood, and put a torch to her? She would make a thick smoke, and under cover of that we might push home a landing that would give Hakon the toothache."

"I am in favor of any attack that will not put our fortunes in danger of destruction," said Erling cautiously. "But I do not see what success we could hope for, when Hakon has so many more carls than we."

"Half his folk are townsmen and boendr* levied from the countryside," explained Swain. "Give them a fright, and they will cry for peace."

"Perhaps it is so," said Erling doubtfully.

"I know it is so."

"Still, it is a great risk."

"It is a hold on the crown for Magnus if we win," rasped Swain. "If we sail away from here without a further effort we shall be no better for our voyage."

"What you argue I can not disprove," admitted Erling. "Well, let it be done. We will try our luck, as you indicate."

When the bus was ready for Swain's purpose he had cables carried from her stern to the prows of two of his own longships, and he bade the captains of these ships let the bus drift up to the town.

"But when you are within arrow flight," he added, "go back on your oars sufficiently to keep her in that position, and in the mean time we others will take advantage of the smoke to direct our attack to the best advantage."

It was done as Swain had directed. The moment the flames reached the hold of the bus, choked with straw and timber and cargo from other captured vessels, she commenced to throw off a dense, greasy cloud of black smoke, which spread low over the water because of the light wind that was blowing; and Swain and Erling led their ships into the heart of the cloud, coming close up to the docks and the houses along the strand, so close that through the rifts in the smoke they could see Hakon's troops standing helpless in their ranks, and the townsmen shifting uneasily from foot to foot.

When the arrows commenced to bite, and spears and stones added to the confusion, the troops ashore raged as helplessly as formerly they had stood. They shot their arrows blankly into the heart of the smoke, and hurled their spears whenever they caught a glimpse of a dragon prow or the tip of a mast gliding above the cloudbank; but missles cast at random against men sheltered behind gunwales and shields had little effect compared with the slaughter the hail from the ships wrought in the close-packed ranks on the strand.

Many of the townsmen retired from the piers at once, and as the smoke that drifted overhead became mingled with sparks that caught in the roof thatch of houses forgot their duties as warriors altogether, ran for buckets and confined themselves to fighting the flames.

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* Farmers.

Presently, they wearied of this danger, too, and a number of the principal merchants went to a certain priest who was know as Hroald the Long-Winded—because he preached the longest sermons this side of Purgatory, men said—and begged him to go to Erling and ask peace for the town.

Hroald folded his gown around his fat stomach, standing on the steps of his church in the market place, quite safe from the fighting on the strand, and answered that this was a dangerous task they set him.

"For look you," he recited with pompous precision, "in the heat of battle, as we are amply assured by the chroniclers of the more ancient classical times, as well as by the sagamen of our own day, the perception of men, being so engaged, is decreased in proportion to the intensity of the struggle and their own efforts therein. And this absorption being rendered the more perplexing by the darkness which precedes from the burning ship of which you complain, it might well befall, however accidentally in intent, that some ignorant carl, smiting blindly in his wrath, would do me a mischief and thus incur the perils of eternal torment, a contingency for which I should not care to be responsible, seeing that the care of men's souls and their safety is the great end of my attainment, and furthermore——"

"And furthermore," interrupted one of the merchants, "while you have been talking, holy father, a spark is kindling on the church roof."

"Oh, holy saints!" cried Hroald. "This is unthinkable! Are these people heathens that they burn a church?"

"Heathens or Christians, they will burn the town, if we do not cry them off," said a second merchant. "Go to them, and say that the Tunsburg folk will no longer support Hakon, but will be Magnus's men."

Hroald sought to argue longer, but they took him by the arms and pushed him to a place on the shore where a small boat was waiting, and in this he was rowed out into the smoke cloud. And as luck had it, the ship he first encountered was Swain's *Deathbringer*, and the first face he saw was Swain's, all smeared with sweaty soot, and savage as any fiend's as it glared over the dragon's poop gunwale.

"Oh, holy Olaf!" prayed Hroald. "Here is Satan, himself, come from the Pit! Mercy, devil, mercy!"

"What will you have, priest?" growled Swain. And over his shoulder: "More arrows to starboard, carls. I saw Olvir's black beard that way a moment past."

He turned back to Hroald.

"Well? What is it? Who are you?"

"I— I—am Hroald—I——"

Swain had heard of Hroald, who was a famous man in his way, and burst into a roar of laughter.

"So you are Hroald! Have you come to preach to us?"

Hroald plucked up a shadow of courage from the laughter of the genial demon above him.

"No, I have come for peace. The poor folk of the town, being fearful lest their property will all be consumed by the flames which you have leveled against them, have beseeched me, as their spiritual advisor, to approach King Magnus, or perchance, his father, whom men call Erling Skakki, and make known to them that in return for mercy and a relinquishment of this fell intention they will—"

"Hold! Hold!" shouted Swain, pressing his hands to his ears. "I can make no sense out of your words. Words! Yes, that is what they are. A surfeit of words. Talk sense, priest? What is it? Do you ask for peace?"

"Indeed, the townfolk have deputed me to press their offer of aid and alliance to King Magnus, providing only—"

"The townfolk wish peace?" challenged Swain.

"Such is the burden of my message, and if Erling or some other lord will vouchsafe me the opportunity—"

"I am Swain. You need go no farther. Row back, Hroald, and acquaint the Tunsburg folk that if they retire from Hakon's array we will not harm them and their town."

"Oh, glad tidings! Oh, news of blessed import! You shall never regret your mercy, Lord Swain. I, myself, will offer candles for you, and my prayers."

"I do not want your candles or your prayers," growled Swain. "I would rather have the blood of an old horse for Odin. Be off with you! My arrows are still sweeping the streets."

HROALD disappeared in the smoke, for the men who had been rowing him bent to their oars, regardless of his continued admonitions and thanks to Swain; his voice could be heard for a long time, growing fainter and fainter, with every now and then a shriek as some ship in the smoke loosed an arrow or cast stone or spear at him, ignorant of his purpose.

But Swain was more merciful than his answer to Hroald had indicated. He was never one to slay folk without need.

"A carl dead is a gap in a shieldwall," he would say, "and though he fights against me today, tomorrow he may be my man."

He steered *Deathbringer* to where the fireship belched and flamed, and bade the two longships that controlled it tow it off before the cables burned asunder.

As the bus receded and the smoke clouds thinned, Erling ranged his dragon alongside of Swain's.

"What is this?" called "Wrynecked." "Why do we haul off the fireship? The town would have been in flames in another——"

"The town asks peace," returned Swain. "And inasmuch as it will soon be King Magnus's town, there is no sense in burning it."

"Ho!" exclaimed Erling. "But Hakon——"

"My advice is that we should run our keels aground at once," replied Swain. "Hakon, without the townfolk, will be in no case to front us long."

The little King Magnus came across the deck to his father's side, and peered above the gunwale at Swain, standing on a dead man to bring his eyes high enough.

"We are beating them, Swain," he piped.

"We are, King," rejoined Swain gravely.

"That was an excellent plan of yours, to use the smoke!"

"It served."

"But now we must try the shieldwall, eh? You and I, Swain! I will stand beside you."

And he brandished a tiny sword as he spoke.

"I do not think there will be a very stiff push," returned Swain. "But if there is need, King, I will call upon you."

Swain addressed Erling again.

"The King approves my plan," he said. "Do you?"

Erling knit his brows.

"You are always for extreme measures, Swain. Let us wait."

"And give Hakon a chance to summon aid, perhaps for Sigurd to reach him! No, no! Strike now or flee."

"Well, if you must——"

"Dip oars, carls!" Swain shouted to his own rowing benches. "Swain goes ashore."

A ragged cheer answered him, and ship by ship, the fleet followed the Orkneyman. Erling, after a moment's hesitation, also gave the word for his dragon to beach. The ships bunched together, and turned their prows toward an open space, just outside the town, where there was room for forming an orderly array. But as Swain had guessed would happen, Hakon's folk did not await them.

The defection of the townsmen became precipitate as soon as Hroald returned with Swain's assurance of peace, and their losses on the strand, without opportunity to fight back, had shaken the courage of the troops. Hakon, himself, would have fought to the last. He gathered his own personal company about him, called to the chiefs who were related to him or had been with him longest and strove in every way to make a shieldwall to receive the attack.

"Come, Olvir," he hailed the Roisterer. "Here is your chance to meet Swain, knee to knee. We are as many as they, and fresh, where they are worn with the shipwork, the oarbite sore in their hands."

But Olvir shook his head.

"It is not my way to meet Swain when he has the advantage."

"It is we have the advantage. We will slay them as they drop from their gunwales. They can never lock shields."

"You are over confident," said Olvir, slinging his ax over his shoulder. "Also, I am not of a mind to fight for Sigurd's jarldom when he is not here."

This speech was caught up on all sides, and the word spread through the ranks of Hakon's folk— "Why should we endanger our bodies for Sigurd's jarldom, seeing that Sigurd is safe in Konungahela?"

Several chiefs who had remained with the king ran off, and the common men began to flee by scores.

"To me, Hakon's folk!" cried the king in a final effort to rally his supporters.

But instead of rallying they fled faster, and Olvir caught Hakon by the arm.

"This has gone far enough," said the Roisterer gruffly. "It is boy's talk that holds you here. Come! We have horses waiting. Let us go while there is time. If we lose this battle we shall win the next. But if you die here what benefit shall we have of it?"

Hakon wept and cursed in the heat of his rage, but a dozen chiefs joined themselves with Olvir, lifted him on the back of a horse and galloped away with him even as Swain and the Orkneyfolk tumbled ashore, first of Magnus' fleet to reach Tunsburg strand.

## VII

KING HAKON and his folk fled up the country, and took the land road north to Throndhjem, but before they left Viken Broadshoulders dispatched a messenger to warn Jarl Sigurd of his defeat and bid the jarl sail to Nidaros with such ships as he had in the Gaut River.

Sigurd lost no time in complying with this order, for he had word independently that Swain and Erling were on the point of moving against him with a great armament, including all the ships they had captured from Hakon at Tunsburg. He shoved off his keels that day, and put to sea, heading far to the westward in order that he might not run into Magnus' fleet by mischance.

Eindride Ungi had tidings of Hakon's disaster from a friendly bondi of the Seaside above Tunsburg, and he likewise fared for Nidaros to rejoin Broadshoulders. But when he arrived in the merchant town he discovered that he was not as popular as he had been.

"Little luck have we had of you, Eindride," quoth Hakon bitterly. "In the beginning, you must let Swain know of our plans, and afterward permit him to humiliate you and escape. And lastly, by your absence, you made it possible for Erling and Swain to drive us out of Tunsburg."

"If what men say be true," retorted Eindride with some temper, "there is another side to that story, Lord King. You might have held Tunsburg if your folk had been willing to bide the shock."

"Eindride speaks justly," declared Jarl Sigurd. "I am told there was an unwillingness to hammer steel because I was not present."

"It is certain that we were not inclined to bare our necks in defense of your property, Sigurd, when you were safe in Konungahela," said Olvir Rosta.

Sigurd reached for his sword, but King Hakon came between the two men.

"Little respect do you show for me, who am your king," he complained. "It is sufficient to say that all of us have been at fault, myself amongst the rest, seeing that I should have persisted in my resolution to resist our enemies when they landed."

"In that case, you would have been dead by now, Lord King," said Olvir.

"I am bound to agree with Olvir in that," added Jarl Sigurd, "albeit I say, too, that matters would have happened otherwise had he and the rest of your chiefs been as resolute as yourself. But it is frequently noted that one man of daring can not temper the hearts of a thousand peace lovers."

Olvir and Sigurd were nigh coming to blows again over this, but the king ordered his housecarls to pull them apart, and afterward he said that he would have slain whichever one of them moved to harm the other. Also, he ordered that no man should speak in further despite of Eindride, apologizing himself for what he had said, with the remark that it was not given to all people to be sensible in every emergency. But for all his efforts to weld his great chiefs into friendship once more they were never again as intimate as they had been.

Jarl Sigurd and his friends dwelt apart from Olvir Rosta's company, and neither would have aught to do with Eindride and his band of outland venturers—skalli vikings, Olvir dubbed them, because of their niceties in dress and equipment and the rich way of living they practised.

Yet Hakon and his faction soon regained confidence in the future, for all the outlaws and landless men and younger sons and restless spirits, who had been accustomed to try their luck in vikingfaring were thrown back upon Norway by reason of the growing courage of the southland folk and the stone borgs that had been built at frequent intervals along the coasts of Scotland, England, Valland and every other land that formerly had been easy prey to the Norse raiders.

Except Swain, no man had had much luck at vikingfaring for years, and the lawless folk were quick to seize upon the opportunities for ravage and plunder which their adherence to Hakon conferred upon them.

In those days in Norway the party of King Magnus stood for orderly government; King Hakon's people were more inclined to let the country go as it pleased.

Hakon was a brave young king, but he had spent his life in longships since he was able to swing steel, and he had no ambition other than to win himself as much wealth and power as possible. Swain and Erling, on the other hand, were fighting for more than the kingship of Magnus; they looked to see the whole land consolidated under the reign of one king, with an increase in wealth and order such as this policy should ensure.

Naturally, under the circumstances, the disorderly folk, the troublemakers, flocked to Hakon's banner. The substantial men of property and conservative views and the merchants and priests adopted the cause of Magnus, which had been the cause of King Ingi, who had held views identical with Swain's and Erling's.

King Magnus' host was much augmented after Tunsburg fight. The dissensions in Hakon's ranks were made public by prisoners, and Armod composed a song on the battle, in which he said:

"Olvir declares he will not go
In battle 'gainst Jarl Sigurd's foe,
If Jarl Sigurd does not come,
But with his housecarls sits at home.

King Magnus' men rush up the street,
Eager with Hakon's folk to meet;
But Hakon's war hawks, somewhat shy,
Turn quick about, and off they fly."

This song was sung from end to end of the land by the scalds, and made much talk and laughter—as did a stave which Oddi was wont to recite:

"If Olvir grudges Sigurd's wealth,
And Sigurd plots with angry stealth
The Roisterer's influence to take,
Who, then, will Hakon's shieldwall break?"

Some of Erling's advisers were inclined to urge that they should force conclusions with Hakon that summer, but Swain sided with the cautious chief against that policy.

"Let us first make certain of the Viken country and the land between as far north as Bergen," he said. "We shall gain more by delay than Broadshoulders can, for the stronger we grow the more doubters will come to us. If we sailed to Nidaros now we might slay Hakon, and we might not. And if by any bad luck he defeated us we should be hard put to it to maintain ourselves in Norway. Well enough is good enough."

"This is one time I find you as deliberate as myself, Swain," answered Erling with a smile.

* * *

THEY had little difficulty in performing the task Swain had outlined, and before the cold weather set in they came to Bergen and quartered their troops in the town and the surrounding farms, sending home the companies of some chiefs, so that they might keep down the expense.

By Swain's suggestion, Erling maintained considerable state around his son. The child king's guards were provided with scarlet cloaks, and every day he sat on a throne at the head of the great hall in his skalli, with his father on one side of him and Swain on the other, and received folk who had complaints to make or desired the king's justice or wished to offer him fealty.

It made a considerable impression. Men who had said previously that he would be niddering who submitted himself to a babe now admitted that they had spoken too hastily.

"He is of the royal blood," they said, "and born on the right hand, where Hakon was on the left. Also, a babe fostered by Swain is likely to become a stalwart warrior."

Several weeks before Yule an emissary came to Bergen from Denmark, bearing a message to Erling from King Valdemar:

> Valdemar rejoices to see that Erling's first accomplishment was to reconquer Viken, and in token of his appreciation of this feat the king has been pleased to confer upon Erling the title of Jarl of that country.

"What shall we reply?" Erling asked blankly of Swain. "What Valdemar seeks is that I should offer to hand over Viken to him at once."

"Tell him that you are grateful for his message," counseled Swain roughly. "Say that, and no more; but scrape together all the gold you can spare, and send it to him, with the word that it is an earnest of your gratitude."

"But what will he do, then?" returned Erling. "And what can we do if——"

"How do I know what he will do?" growled Swain. "Put him off now, and meet that trouble when you must. My guess is that the gold will placate him for a while. You can secure more to replace it if you slay Hakon next summer."

## VIII

TOWARD the end of the winter Swain sent the two scalds, Armod and Oddi, north to discover what the Throndhjem folk were discussing, for such famous men as they were welcome in any skalli during the months the people were snowbound. They returned several weeks past Easter with the tidings that Hakon was mustering a greater host than he had led south of Viken the preceding spring. Some men came to him willingly, and some by compulsion, but in numbers he exceeded the array that Swain and Erling led. His one disadvantage was that he lacked ships to embark so considerable a multitude.

"*Humph,*" said Swain, "it appears to me that this is a situation which requires guile."

"As how?" queried Erling.

They were sitting by themselves in Erling's private chamber, the scalds having just quitted them.

"Why, we are still short of the men we should have," answered Swain. "That is not to be denied, and the wise man is he who reckons his defects as vigilantly as does his enemy. Hakon has a plenitude of men, but few ships. We have many ships, but scarce the men to row them—and if we met his folk in a shield pushing, his wings would overlap us on either flank."

"Yes, yes," Erling agreed anxiously, "and it becomes us to act with caution, Swain."

"Caution I grant you," nodded Swain.

"We must bide in Bergen until——"

"If we bide in Bergen then Hakon will ravage the estates of our friends," rejoined Swain. "The scalds have said that he was constrained to remain in Nidaros only by fear of what we might undertake afloat."

"Would you have us cast away this caution you advise?" demanded Erling.

"No, I would turn it to a profitable account."

Swain looked out the window beside them at the haven, white with merchant shipping from all the south lands. A Danish longship was in the act of raising her sails.

"Is the Dane for Nidaros?" he asked.

"Yes." Erling was puzzled. "But what of that?"

"It occurs to me that it would be a good device to forbid all the merchantmen going northward. By doing so we might prevent Hakon from securing any news of our movements, save that which we intended him to have."

"Perhaps I am very ignorant," said Erling "but I am unable to understand your purpose."

Swain leaned forward, and commenced to tick off points of an argument on his thick, blunt fingers, one by one. Erling at first heard him dubiously, then with excited approval.

"So," concluded Swain, sinking back in his chair. "And if that does not fool them I am at a loss, and Olvir Rosta may have a free stroke at my neck. But you had best send a messenger speedily to command the Dane back to his moorings or we shall have to overhaul him with a longship."

Erling bounded to his feet, ugly face aglow with exultation.

"I will send word, myself. Ho, Swain, I think we have here a trick that will accomplish great things for us!"

"You will first receive a boiling-mad crew of merchants," retorted Swain grimly. "Be prepared for that, carl. You must be firm with them, but regretful, for when all is said the merchants are the best friends we possess in the land."

IT FELL out as Swain had predicted. The two chiefs were at their evening meal when one of Erling's courtmen came in with an odd look on his face.

"Here are all the Bergen merchants and outland folk from the shipping in the skalli yard Erling," he said. "They will see you forthwith. And they are as wrathy and loud of tongue as so many penned bears!"

"Fetch them in," ordered Erling with a grin.

But the courtman wagged his beard in dissent.

"There is not room for them in the hall."

"Go out to them," counseled Swain. "So you will conciliate them at the outset."

"True talk," exclaimed Erling, "but do you come with me, Swain. I am like to need your backing."

"That you are," grunted Swain.

The skalli yard was packed tight with raging merchants and ship-captains, and at the first sight of Erling they set up a howl of indignant protest.

"Why can we not sail north?"

"What is this word that all shipping must remain at Bergen?"

"Where are we to sell our goods?"

"Will you ruin us, king's father?"

Erling raised one hand in a gesture for silence.

"One question at a time," he said. "I have ordered that no ship shall sail from the town because if you were permitted to go and come Hakon would receive news of whatever we intended against him or in defense of ourselves."

"But this is ruin, Lord Erling," protested one of the Bergen merchants. "What are we to do with the goods we have bought for sale in the north?"

"Sell them here," returned Erling promptly.

"But our folk have purchased all they can use. We should lose——"

"If you lose it is to be regretted," said Erling, "but still it is better that it should be so than that the Nidarosfolk should have more goods. To keep them lacking is to our advantage."

"How long must our ships lie idle?" called an English shipman.

"I can not say," replied Erling.

"Not long, if I have my way," growled Swain. "When we go out to do battle with Hakon you carls may sail in our wakes."

And that was the best comfort the merchants could extract from the situation. The taverns buzzed with angry talk, but Erling's longships mounted guard in the haven, and no man cared to dare the pursuit of those sea crawlers.

This was the very beginning of the trading season, and ships came in every day from the southlands. They came in gaily, expecting a good trade, but their captains had not been ashore long enough for the first lip-wetting when the gayness was changed to wrathy expostulation.

Again and again parties of the merchants went up to the king's skalli, and each time Erling received them, offered them wine and ale to drink, and sent them away no better satisfied than when they passed the scarlet-cloaked guards in the outer yard.

So matters went for several weeks, and then of a sudden one day the word spread along the strand that the king's men were drawing his ships ashore. The merchants and ship-captains ran in haste to the royal dockyards. Yes, it was true. Snekkes and longships were being hauled up on the ways, and the shipwrights were actually setting up the winter penthouses over them. In reply to the questions that were showered upon them the workers answered only that they had been ordered to do so. They knew no more than others, but it was said that Swain and Erling had decided not to fare north this season.

Back up to the king's skalli rushed the merchants, and were ushered into the hall, where Erling sat at the high table, Swain very black and gloomy beside him.

"I am glad that you have come to me," said Erling courteously before any man had a chance to address him, "for I was on the point of sending you an invitation to attend the king. We have decided to remove the prohibition upon sailings to the north. You are all at liberty to go wherever you will."

"Not with my leave," scowled Swain. "This is a foolish business."

The merchants exchanged looks of curious speculation. One of the boldest cleared his throat and spoke apologetically:

"It is not our desire to seem unduly curious, but will you acquaint us whether you intend to sail in our wake or before us, Lord Erling? We are men of peace, and in no way prepared to be caught up in a battle between hostile fleets of longships."

"That is a fair question," answered Erling. "I have ordered my own ships to be shedded over."

"Ah, then you do not propose to sail north?" asked another merchant.

"Some of my friends have advised me that I might meet Hakon to better advantage here in Bergen," replied Erling warily.

"I was not of their number," roared Swain pounding his fist upon the table. "We shall all be called niddering folk if we skulk here in the merchant town, instead of going forth to meet our enemies."

Erling shrugged his shoulders.

"If we do not agree, that is to be regretted Swain," he remarked. "I will go as far with you as I can."

No more was said, but the merchants returned to the strand, and spread the word that Swain and Erling were in open disagreement at last.

"Swain was all for sailing north to attack Hakon's folk," they reported. "But Erling would have none of it."

"No one need be surprized by that," said others, "seeing that Erling has always been disposed to caution."

This was a Sunday. There was a soft and favorable wind from the south, and before vespers were sung most of the shipping in the haven had put to sea and fared north, the various vessels hoisting every sail they could bend to the ropes and urging themselves on with oars when they might, for each merchant was keen to come first to Nidaros, where all knew that by now there must be a hungry market for their wares.

"Hakon will pay well for what we know," thought more than one.

## IX

SWAIN'S device worked out as he had expected. When the merchants met Hakon he asked what news they had of Magnus' folk, and those who were friendly to him or anxious to curry favor or else nursed resentment against Erling for the embargo laid upon them at Bergen replied very volubly, saying that Erling had laid up his ships and had given over any thought of a voyage north that summer.

"What does Swain think of that?" inquired Olvir Rosta, who stood by the king on the strand.

"He thinks ill of it," returned one of the Outlanders. "We heard him rebuke Erling for what he called niddering conduct."

"Then there is no doubt that this news is true news, King," commented Olvir.

"That is my opinion," answered Hakon. "The question for us to decide is how we can turn Erling's cowardice to best use."

Jarl Sigurd, who was also present, asked the merchants then if Erling and Swain possessed a numerous troop of followers. Some merchants said one thing and some another, according to their secret opinions regarding the struggle for the crown; but the result of the several statements made was to convince Broadshoulders and his friends that their enemies were stronger than formerly, but not quite so strong as the northern array.

"My counsel is that we should proceed deliberately," said Olvir Rosta. "If we act with haste——"

"I do not see why we should be deliberate," Eindride Ungi broke in. "We have more men than they."

"How would you move against them, Eindride?" demanded Jarl Sigurd, who for once was in agreement with Olvir. "We have the men, but as has often been said before, we lack ships."

"How if we took some of the merchant craft to transport our troops?" offered Eindride.

The merchants cried out at this, and Hakon himself spoke up.

"No, no, Eindride, I have never had any luck on the water. Let us make this fight on the land."

"So that we fight, I do not care where it is," answered Eindride boldly. "Let us arm our folk, and march south by the seaside."

But Jarl Sigurd and Olvir both resisted Eindride's suggestion.

"You can never be too strong to fight Swain," protested Olvir.

"He who examines the hillside in front of him never trips over a hidden stick," remarked Sigurd.

"Here is only division of opinion," exclaimed Hakon impatiently. "What will you have, carls?"

And Eindride puffed out his chest and cried scornfully—

"It is plainly to be seen that some men are for fighting and some for ale-swigging!"

"In your teeth!" growled Olvir.

"Let us fight, by all means," said Jarl Sigurd, "but so contrive it that we shall have the advantage."

"How?" challenged the king.

"Thus: We can never have too many folk to lead against Swain, as Olvir has said. Also, we shall do well if we confuse them at the beginning of the summer. They will look to see us come straight to Bergen by land or sea path. Instead, I advise that we take what ships we have and fare south, ravaging the boendr on the seaside who are friendly to Erling and gathering additional men for our company, as we go.

"It is probable that the people we injure will send to Bergen for aid, and perhaps Erling and Swain will be induced to come forth with their carls and attempt to defend the countryside. If this happens we can summon the remainder of our friends to follow us by land from Throndhjem, and fall upon Erling's troop in the open country, where he will not have walls to aid him or ships at hand to secure his retreat."

"A plan worth trying!" approved Olvir.

"Yes, it has points," said Eindride doubtfully, "but I shall not be satisfied with any fight unless it permits me to lay my ship alongside Swain's."

"You had better be thankful if your luck saves you from such a fight," cried Hakon, "for I doubt very much whether you would gain the advantage of Swain. He is a far more dangerous foe afloat than ashore."

Olvir shook his head vigorously.

"That is dangerous talk, King," quoth the Roisterer. "If it were Swain alone we had to reckon with I should be as fearful of a shield pushing as a hull cracking. But our great advantage is that Erling's caution has weakened his confidence, and a man who is not sure of the future is half beaten before the bowmen loose."

THE next day Hakon embarked the choicest troops he owned, with a notable body of chiefs, Jarl Sigurd, Olvir Rosta, Eindride Ungi, Onund Simon's son, Jon Svein's son, Philip Peter's son, Philip Gyrd's son, Ragnvald Kunta, Sigurd Kapa, Sigurd Hiupa, Frirek Keina, Asbjorn of Forland, Thorbjorn Gunnar's son, Stradbjarne and others, and fared south to Veey. He had upward of twenty ships, but not so many of these were large. Eindride's trireme, *Draglaun*, loomed like a church above the snekkes* and skeids.†

From Veey he dispatched Jarl Sigurd with a number of ships to forage in More, collect recruits and levy taxes. Broadshoulders, himself, with Olvir Rosta, Onund Simon's son, Eindride Ungi and the rest of the chiefs, thirteen ships in all, sailed on south to Steinavag and rested there on the island until they heard what luck the forayers had in More. His forces now were in three parts, the greatest number penned up in Nidaros, shipless, several thousand men with his banner at Steinavag and the remainder with Jarl Sigurd.

## X

IT WAS on a Sunday that the merchants had sailed from Bergen. On the following Wednesday, before Mass was sung in the town, Erling and Swain embarked their choicest troops aboard twenty-one large ships, dragons and longships of substantial burden, and pointed their prows to the north.

Erling and the child king sailed in the *Baekisudin*, which had been King Ingi's ship, and Swain sailed side by side with them in *Deathbringer*. The Bergenfolk cheered lustily as the fleet rowed to sea, and the troops left in the town rattled swords on shields and endeavored by noise making to atone for the disappointment of missing the battle all men knew was soon to come.

For several days nothing happened. The ships sailed and rowed as occasion served and Magnus prattled hourly his disgust that the foe were not in sight. But one evening Swain overhauled a fisherman of More, and from him wrung the news that Hakon was at Steinavag. A thrill of exultation shot through the fleet. The crews bent two to an oar, and the oar holes smoked with the grinding of their efforts, while the scalds sang martial lays to enencourage them. They made two doegrs' * distance, it seemed, in one doegr's time.

As was to be expected, however, warning of their coming sped ahead of them, for the folk of the seaside spied the passage of the fleet from many a stead, and horsemen flogged their steeds to carry the word north. King Hakon and his lendermen had just celebrated matins—the day was a Friday—and were sitting on a hillside of the island, watching the common men of the host playing games, when they spied a small boat rowing out from the mainland.

"Those carls are in haste," remarked the king idly. "See, they are pulling so hard that they bend back nearly to the keel."

"Perhaps they have a message for us from Sigurd," said Olvir Rosta.

When the men in the small boat reached the island's shore they did not tarry to belay the boat, but leaped overside the instant the keel took ground and ran up the hill, crying:

"Where is the king? Where is Broadshoulders?"

Hakon rose from his seat, and walked down to meet them, shouting—

"Here I am, carls. What is your word?"

The boatmen were so out of breath, what with the rowing and running, that they could not speak connectedly, and Eindride Ungi called—

"Have you news of Erling Skakki that you make such haste?"

At this both men nodded their heads vigorously, and one panted—

"Here comes Erling against you, sailing from the south, and Swain and many others with him."

"How many ships has he?" asked Olvir.

"Twenty-one or thereabouts," answered the second messenger," of which many are great enough."

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* Cutters. † Headless longships.

* The doegr was a period of twelve hours.

"And now you shall soon see their sails," cried the other.

"Ill news! Ill news!" groaned Onund Simon's son.

"Too near to the nose, said the peasant, when his eye was knocked out," exclaimed Eindride.

"You are mistaken to make too much of this," said Hakon, undismayed. "It is true we are taken by surprise, but——"

A great shout came from a group of men who had lingered on the hilltop.

"Sails, Lord King! Sails coming out of the south!"

"Here is no time to waste," snapped Olvir.

And Eindride echoed him—

"He who has the disadvantage must jump the quickest."

"Is it dignified to run?" asked the king. "We are not a weak company."

"But we have not such a fleet as comes against us," shouted several lendermen.

"In More Jarl Sigurd awaits us," reminded Eindride. "Also, the townfolk in Veey are our friends. Ashore there we shall be safe."

"It was in my mind that I had heard you saying you would not be satisfied with any fight unless it permitted you to lay your ship alongside Swain's!" exclaimed Hakon contemptuously.

"It was not my thought to fight Swain alone," retorted Eindride.

"That is sense, Lord King," expostulated Olvir. "We are too few to make head against twenty-one great dragons and longships."

The king shook his head, groaning with shame and disgust.

"Truly has it been said that my luck deserts me on the sea!" he exclaimed. "Well, if we must flee let us lose no time."

He ordered the ludr-horns to be blown in signal that all his folk were to embark, and the men around him raised a great shout, which was carried from group to group. But the common men at first were not eager to go aboard ship, for they had been exercising vigorously all the morning at their games, and their midday meat was ready on the cooking fires, so that most waited to grab a handful or two of food. And when the word was passed that the hostile fleets were actually within view there was a disorderly rush to the strand, and men tumbled aboard whichever vessel was nearest.

CREWS were mingled together, and some ships had more than their regular complement, while others were undermanned. Eindride's trireme was the only craft that had not been beached or run close ashore, and because it was the farthest out and the most difficult to come at the majority of her crew betook themselves to more convenient vessels, and Eindride was hard put to it to get his anchor up and way on her.

A many of his thralls had been slain in the first encounter with Swain or had sickened and died from the rigor of a Norse Winter, to which they were unaccustomed, he had been constrained to employ Norsemen to pull the two upper banks of oars. With a short crew his clumsy vessel could only crawl at the pace of a log in the current, and sails were of no use because the wind was contrary.

The result of all this was that while Hakon and the rest of his fleet made fair progress, *Baekisudin* and *Deathbringer* came abeam of Eindride's *Draglaun* under the lee of the island known as Sekke, and Eindride, who was no coward, despite his vanity and foolish ways, seeing that he could not escape, decided to adopt the more honorable course, brought his ship around and met his enemies' attack with a right good will.

"Ho," exclaimed Swain, "there is valor in the Weathercock!"

Erling called across the water to Swain—

"Let us offer Eindride peace for the sake of the days we were shieldmates."

"Not with my approval," returned Swain promptly. "We could never trust him in those days, and he did ill by us when he took Hakon's side a year ago."

"It irks my stomach to slay a man I have known as well as Eindride," persisted Erling.

"If you will not, leave him to me," growled Swain. "I will cheerfully hew him down. All his life he has never realized when he was well off, but must be forever chasing this ambition or that, like a bee after fresh honey."

So Swain bade his helmsmen run *Deathbringer* aboard of the trireme on her larboard beam, and he and Erik mustered their archers and spearmen on the forecastle, in order that they might wreck as much slaughter as possible before the hulls crashed. And when Erling perceived these preparations he was unable to obey his first inclination to shift his helm over, and continue in pursuit of the remainder of Hakon's fleet.

"We must support Swain," he said to the folk with him on *Baekisudin's* poop, "for he may not have as great luck against the trireme as he did on the occasion of their earlier meeting. Put up the helm, and we will board Eindride to starboard."

Eindride stood on *Draglaun's* poop, very splendid in his gilded mail, and he summoned all the free men of the crew from the oars, and, albeit he was undermanned, he yet had with him as many folk as there were both on Swain's ship and Erling's, and he had, too, the additional advantage that his vessel's sides were high above those of the two dragons.

"Hearts up, carls!" he cried to his company. "We will teach Swain a lesson he'll not forget."

They cheered him willingly, for, indeed, they were a brave troop, including men who had served in the Varang Guards of the Greek emperor in Mikligard and others who had passed their lives in viking faring and adventuring. Cold steel was the favorite repast of these folk.

Swain steered *Deathbringer* into the larboard oarbank of the trireme, and missiles showered back and forth betwixt the two vessels as they lurched together, Swain suffering the most, since his men were exposed, while the crew of the trireme, high overhead, could take shelter whenever they wished at close quarters. Also, when *Deathbringer's* crew strove to climb the rounded hull of the trireme they were easily beaten back by Eindride's folk, even after *Baekisudin* ground into *Draglaun's* starboard side. Now and again a handful of men would gain the bulwarks, only to be hacked apart or cast back upon their comrades below.

Finally, Swain and Erik undertook to build a heap of oar benches and other gear against the trireme's hull, and from this they forced an entry, which they made good as half a dozen other vessels of their fleet came up, flinging men over their bows like the salt scud on the wings of an easterly gale. *Draglaun's* bulwarks were topped in ten places at once. Erling was on her deck not seven strokes behind Swain. Her waist was cleared, and the fighting shifted fore and aft to poop and forecastle.

In the mean time, and while this had been happening, Hakon and the other twelve ships of the northern fleet had arrived close to Veey; but when they heard the bellowing of the warhorns astern and marked how Eindride was beset and how gallantly he bore himself, Broadshoulders came about and hailed his ship captains to follow him.

"It appears that Eindride did not boast idly when he said he would not rest until he had laid his ship alongside of Swain's," cried the king. "And as honorable men, it would not become us to reach safety under the shelter of Eindride's lone fight. We must bear a hand for him."

Onund Simon's son turned his ship, very reluctantly, and came under Hakon's stern.

"Think well what you do, Lord King," shouted Onund. "We are outnumbered, and like to——"

Olvir Rosta, also, foamed up, his dragon *Fafnir's Bane* a long streak of black, red and green, in the midst of the creamy belt of spume raised by her oars.

"Madness, King!" hailed the Roisterer. "Why should we risk death for that fool, Eindride?"

" 'That fool Eindride risks death for us," retorted Hakon. "And there are times when even a king can not afford the part of disgrace."

"You do this by no counsel of mine," scowled Olvir.

And as the king was heard to exclaim to the officer setting the stroke, "Faster, carl, faster!" Olvir spoke low to his folk and ordered them to moderate their efforts, although continuing to give evidence of an attempt at speed.

The effect of this was that Olvir's ship lagged behind the rest, and when Hakon and his lendermen drove into the rim of longships that surrounded Eindride's trireme like dogs worrying a wounded stag, *Fafnir's Bane* remained on the outer edge of the circle, lying board-and-board beside a craft of twenty oars, half of whose crew were on *Draglaun's* deck.

But those of her folk left to her offered enough of a fight to keep Olvir busy, and since this was all the Roisterer desired, he simply clung to the position he had chosen, creating a vast din of shouting and weapon clashing, but careful not to venture an oar's length farther than he must, and vigilant for the first excuse that would justify flight.

## XI

HAKON'S return did not suffice to save Eindride, but it brought about what men afterward said was the most desperate and disorderly sea fight since the old berserk days.

Full tilt into the ring of dragons and longships around the trireme came the twelve vessels that had followed Broadshoulders' lead. Olvir, of course, had bided at the circle's edge, but the other eleven penetrated it, and became involved in hopeless confusion with Magnus' ships.

Crews leaped from bulwark to bulwark, regardless of whether they fought on their own decks or not. A dozen separate fights commenced, dissolved into smaller combats, fused again, divided, swirled this way and that.

Sometimes the struggle was on Hakon's vessels; again, his folk would succeed in carrying it to Magnus's. But wherever it was men fought it was with a grim determination that earned the impartial praise of the scalds who celebrated their deeds. Those of Eindride's men who survived the last rush of Swain and Erling escaped to join Hakon, and added their strength to the brave effort of Broadshoulders' men.

Eindride, himself, died in this fashion. He had retreated to the poop of *Draglaun*, with a very considerable company, and both Swain and Erling came at him there, hemming him so completely that his men, who had fought very well, commenced to drop over the stern, some into the water, others to the decks of any ships they could reach. Eindride held the ladder stairs as long as he could, and when he saw that he must give ground and permit his enemies to reach the poop on a level with himself, he raised his voice in a great shout:

"Ho, Swain, Erling! Heed me for a breath! Eindride calls!"

Erling lowered his sword immediately, but Swain called back—

"If you ask quarter——"

"I ask quarter for such of my folk as are here with me," returned Eindride, "seeing that they have conducted themselves like brave warriors. For myself, I wish only to meet Swain in single combat. He has put a grave slight on me, and I am disposed to show that he is not so great a man as the scalds who attend him would have people believe."

A snarl of rage came from Swain's men, and they started to surge forward again, but Swain held them back with outstretched arms.

"I have no quarrel with Eindride's terms," he said calmly. "For his folk here, they shall have quarter. For himself, I will gladly give him an opportunity to hammer helms with me, and this the more readily because I have determined that he must die, and it will please the vanity which had enthralled him that he should die at my hands, and so be assured of a fame he might not otherwise attain."

Eindride turned crimson, and heaved up the huge Varangian ax, which was his battle weapon.

"In your teeth!" he howled.

"Bide, bide," answered Swain. "Let your carls drop their arms."

Sullenly, with mutters of anger, Eindride's men clattered their weapons on the deck, and submitted to being confined in the spacious poop of the trireme. As it chanced, they were the only ones of Hakon's folk to receive quarter that bloody day.

"Now, are you sure that you need only fear my ax?" snorted Eindride as the last prisoner was led away.

"What if he lives, Swain?" spoke up Erling.

"He will not live," answered Swain.

"You are too confident," sneered Eindride.

"I am so confident," replied Swain, "that I will say you are to go free if by any mischance you slay me."

"I do not seek life at your hands," fumed Eindride.

"At mine, Eindride," exclaimed Erling. "I can not hope that you may slay Swain, but if you do——"

"Talk never made the fire burn," exclaimed Swain impatiently.

"We have fought with this carl behind the same shield in bygone times, Swain," urged Erling.

"Little did it mean in his recollection," snapped Swain. "Come, Eindride, we have talked too much."

"I am content," said Eindride, and he prowled toward Swain with legs crooked and ax held so that he could swing it in any direction.

Swain awaited him in careless posture. The Orkneyman's famous sword Hausakliufr—Skullsplitter—was hanging from his hand, point to the deck. Several of his men, accustomed though they were to his success, murmured remonstrance.

"Guard, Swain!"

"Up blade, Kingsbane!"

"Ho, Fostri, watch that ax!"

But Swain knew his opponent. Eindride, always vain, always self-confident, with never a thought for the future, laughed aloud.

"You are not so eager for this fight as you pretended!" he barked contemptuously.

The ax flickered in air, swished down from right to left in the collarbone cut which no mail could resist. But Swain's sword flashed up to meet it. The heavy blade sheared through the thick oaken haft, and the ax head rang on the deckplanks. Eindride's mouth gaped open, his eyes stared. A gasp came from the onlookers, became a grunt of wonder as Hausakliufr hovered momentarily at the peak of its cut upward, and then sang down upon Eindride's neck just above the collar of his glittering pantzer coat.

The plate of proof, forged by the cunningest Greek armorers, turned the blow as no linkmail might have done, but the blade bit deep through flesh and bone, turned sidewise by the steel's resistance, and Eindride's head seemed to jump upward on the column of blood that spouted from the severed veins.

"A short fight is a lucky one," growled Swain. "Hark, carls! There is more work to do."

FOR at that instant came the battering crash of hulls that proclaimed Hakon's entry into the fray, and a tempest of battlecries rang above the clang of steel and booming of the war horns.

Calls for help came from several of the southern ships, whose companies had been denuded by the rush to carry the trireme.

"Hakon has delivered himself to us," said Swain, "but I advise you, Erling, to keep a close watch upon your son."

"That is good advice," agreed Erling. "This is a strange battle."

"Whether it is strange or not, we ought to be able to secure an advantage from it," replied Swain. "Do you guard Magnus, and I will fare afield, and try what fortune will be won on cluttered decks."

Erling said that this should be so, and he climbed down to *Baekisudin's* deck, and formed a ring of the most stalwart of his housecarls around the little king, nor did he stir from the ring, himself, for the remainder of the fighting, except when now and again a stray band of Hakon's folk, in flight or pursuit, crossed *Baekisudin's* gunwales.

Swain gathered all the men he could find, and dropped over the other side of *Draglaun* where the fighting was bitterest, and so took his path from ship to ship, as occasion served. There was only a short time during which Hakon had the better of the struggle, for as soon as Swain appeared and the men who had been on the trireme returned to their vessels, Broadshoulders was outnumbered and outfought. He must have fallen at the first clash, with the bulk of his men, but for the confusion of the fray. The sails were lying across the decks. Oars were scattered about the benches. No two ships were bound together, and the huddle of craft simply ground hither and yon, occasionally gunwale to gunwale, a moment later with clear water a spear's-length wide separating them.

Swain was picking his way from bench to bench of a ship that had just been cleared when a man in a gray cloak sprang from the next ship and alighted on a chest under the forecastle. Swain eyed him curiously.

"Ho," said the Orkneyman. "Who are you, carl?"

The man clutched the cloak tighter to him.

"There was no staying over there," he replied. "Our friends were all dead."

" 'Our friends'," repeated Swain. "Now, I wonder who our friends might be?"

And then he noted the unusually square set of the shoulders under the cloak, and laughed aloud, striding closer.

"I know you, Broadshoulders! We have met before. Do you remember? It was on a ship's deck in the Gaut River fight under Hising."

"Yes," assented Hakon, casting aside the cloak to give his arms free play. "And I should have perished there, if you had allowed the archers to loose at me in the water when I swam ashore."

"And we meet a second time on a ship's deck when you have need of flight!" commented Swain.

"I am not of a mind to flee," answered Hakon shortly.

"Why did you return to meet us, when your escape was assured?" asked Swain.

"And leave Eindride to withstand you alone! That is not the course an honorable man would advise."

"No," agreed Swain. "You are an honorable man. *Humph*, I should put my sword to your throat, but——"

Hakon placed himself in a posture of defense.

"You are welcome to try," he said. "If God wishes my death, I am not afraid to meet it."

"Well spoken!" growled Swain. "I do not like this business, though. Myself, I have always advised your death, yet—*humph!* Say, Hakon, if we give you quarter, will you submit to Erling, yield up the kingship and accept exile or imprisonment?"

"It is not my inclination to prefer life with dishonor," returned Hakon. "After all, I have been a king."

"Ah, yes," said Swain. "But a live man is better than a dead king, Hakon. And while a man has life he can work and strive for regaining what he has lost."

"That is strange advice from you," said Hakon.

"Well, I find myself sorrowful for a king as honorable as yourself," answered Swain. "There are few like you. But sorrowful or no, I can not stand here. Will you yield?"

Hakon cast down his sword.

"To you, yes. But there is no other man could have taken me sword in hand, Swain."

Swain guided him across the rolling ships to the forecastle of *Baekisudin* and gave him in charge of Erling's folk there.

"I charge you," he said in Hakon's hearing, "to guard him as you would Magnus, for he has yielded himself to me on terms. And moreover, he is an honorable foe, who deserves honorable treatment."

These men, who are not named by the sagas, exclaimed readily that they would protect Hakon with their own lives, from their friends, if need be—"for he is, as you say, Swain, a warrior who is an honor to Norway, and there will be much said in his praise, despite that he has lost the day."

With this Swain went off to continue the task of carrying those of Hakon's ships that had not been cleared, and the word spread over the whole area of the fighting that Hakon had been taken and was held on *Baekisudin's* forecastle. It came first to Erling, and the man who told him had heard it from the forecastlemen at the other end of the dragon.

"They say that they will defend him against you or any man," declared this fellow.

"Did they take him?" answered Erling.

"No, they had him from Swain."

"If Swain took him, and gave him to my forecastle folk to keep, then I am content with any orders Swain gave," returned Erling.

And he sent straightway one of his courtmen forward over the littered waist, where the dead and wounded lay in heaps, to bid the forecastlemen make good their boasts.

"I have no objection to giving Hakon life and safety," he said, "although my chiefs must approve whatever we do."

About the same time a number of Hakon's chiefs heard that he was on *Baekisudin*, and they mustered some hundreds of men and rowed and fought their way through the tangle of the fight, some from deck to deck and some in ships they worked free of the confusion. Swain was trying to cast grapplings on the hull of Olvir's dragon to prevent the Roisterer's escaping, and he was not at hand when this happened.

So vigorous was the attack upon *Baekisudin* that Erling and all his housecarls and courtmen were required to resist it, and they kept the little King Magnus safe, literally, by covering him with their bodies. There was a scutter of arrows in the air, and at last Erling bade them bury the king under a heap of corpses, and by this means they preserved him. Nobody took thought to Hakon in the excitement, and it was only after Swain had returned, black with fury because Olvir had pulled from the welter of ships before the grapplings had caught, and smashed the attempt at rescue that a cry was raised that Broadshoulders was gone.

"Not he!" scouted Swain. "He yielded himself to me, and he was not the man to break his word."

"But he is not here, Swain!" wailed the forecastlemen who still lived, a bare handful.

"Look closer," counseled Swain. "What is that under the gunwale there? It is gray. Haul off those bodies. Yes, so!"

They pulled the heap apart, and under it lay Hakon Herdabreid, dead of a spear thrust in the breast.

Who killed him was never known. It was more likely than not, all folk agreed, that in the flurry and turmoil of the combat a blow from the hand of one of his own men had reached him, for his captors were ringed almost back to back and there was scant room for weapon-play and less time to select an opponent.

"*Humph*," growled Swain when he was satisfied that Hakon was dead. "This has been a battle which we won, but the honor must go to a king who lost both battle and life."

And he had King Magnus dug from beneath the heap of corpses that had sheltered him, and led the child forward to where Hakon lay.

"Do you remember this fight, youngling," ordered Swain gruffly. "It was the making of your kingship. And remember, too, that the king we overthrew for you was a king you will do well to pattern after when you have the strength to swing steel."

Magnus nodded solemnly.

"I will be like him and like you, Swain," he promised. "You shall not have cause to be ashamed of fostering me."

Swain grunted approval as he surveyed the bloodstained little figure.

"We have not fed the warbirds for nothing this day," he said, "and that is more than can be said of most battles."

## XII

THERE was a great slaughter of Hakon's folk in the fight under Sekke, but Olvir Rosta, Onund Simon's son, Frirek Keina and most of the chiefs managed to escape, thanks, first of all, to the proof of their mail which preserved them from their enemies' blows in the heat of the conflict, and after that, to their good luck in tumbling into one of the several ships that were able to imitate Olvir's example and pull away.

Magnus's carls were too weary from the labors of the pursuit and the battle to harry them further, and they reached Veey in safety. Presently Jarl Sigurd joined them, and the whole company fled to the uplands as their only refuge from the wrath of Swain and Erling.

Magnus's chiefs dispatched a swift snekke to call up the troops remaining in Bergen, and when these had arrived by the land road in More they resumed their advance by ship and shore, subduing the country as they proceeded north. The large body of Hakon's men in Nidaros was dispersed without a fight.

Those chiefs who had no blood feud with Erling and his son sent in their submissions and returned with their folk to their steads. Only the men of the more desperate sort headed for the uplands and joined themselves with the skeleton host that still clung to Jarl Sigurd and Olvir. But there was no longer an army or a king in opposition to Magnus, only a band of outlaws who were concerned with the stealing of cattle to feed themselves, rather than with an ambition to rule the land.

"Let them be," advised Swain. "They are turning all the folk against them with their depredations. When we have securely established Magnus as king we will hunt them down like the wolves they are."

So Magnus was carried to Nidaros, and from the merchant town Erling sent a call to an Eyra Thing—so called because it met on the Eyra, the plain between the river and the sea by the town, and which from the old times had the election of the Norse kings—to all the chiefs and famous men in Norway.

And when the Thing-men were assembled, Erling presented his son to them, with Swain holding the boy by the hand.

"This is my son, who is the rightful King of Norway," said Erling. "He succeeds Ingi by blood right and by weapon right, and also because in his rule is the land's best hope of peace and wealth. He has already been elected king in the open Thing, but lest the evil-minded have an excuse to plot in secret against him I have decided to submit his cause to the Eyra Thing, against which there can be no just appeal.

"On my own behalf, I pledge myself to act faithfully as my son's guardian during his tender years, and toward his interests well. And in order that he may be preserved from the softness and indulgence of a parent's rearing, I have obtained the consent of Swain to act as foster father to him and supervise his upbringing. You all know Swain by repute, if it has not been your fortune to meet him, it may be, even, that some of you have had occasion to face him across a shieldwall."

There was a roar of laughter at this gibe.

"We know Fostri!" cried some men. "A shrewd striker, the Fosterer!" hailed others.

And one man called:

"This Swain is forever winning new titles.

Kingsbane he was, and now he must be Fostri."

"Well, what do you say of him?" asked Erling. "The king will have no bower training at his hands."

"Let Swain foster him!" came the answering shout. "Give the king to Swain! Swain Fostri! Swain Fostri!"

When the uproar had died away Swain strode forward a pace, the little king's hand still clutched in his.

"It has been fairly said of me," he growled, "that I am an outlander. But the blood in my veins is Norse blood. My luck is Norse luck. And if I had my way I should worship the old Norse gods—let the priests make the most of that! Years since, I came east from the Orkneyar at King Ingi's urging to aid him in establishing himself against the efforts of his brothers, Sigurd and Eystein. I say frankly to you that then I thought only of the plunder to be won in kings' wars.

"But as the struggle continued, as we lifted Ingi to higher power and as the lawless folk clung the closer to resist him, I saw things differently. I saw, with Ingi's eyes, a Norway such as Harald Haardrada made, a Norway united under one king, a land that other people should fear."

Not a cough interrupted him. Not a foot moved, not a weapon jangled amongst the listening thousands. The boy Magnus, Erling, all the folk, had fastened their gaze upon the Orkneyman's grim features.

"*Humph!*" he growled on. "Enough of myself! You know what a bloody time we have had. Year after year of forayings and burnings, of landfalls and seafarings, of ship fights and land fights. *Humph!* First, we of Ingi's faction slew Sigurd. Then we slew Eystein. Then Hakon's folk slew Ingi. Now we have slain Hakon—or I should say we brought about his slaying, for it is as nearly certain as may be that Broadshoulders had his bane from an unwitting stroke by one of his own folk.

"Four kings have died in these wars. Two of them, Ingi and Hakon, were kings to be proud of. Ingi was a little man in his body with a twisted foot and a hump on his back; but he had a great spirit in him, a spirit like the clean gray flame of a sharp sword. Hakon was a sturdy youth. He had valor and honor and a love for adventuring. He was born on the left-hand, it might be said, and he died on the right-hand, a brave king who was unlucky. Yes, I say this, who was his enemy, he deserved better luck. For he was a very honorable man. The saga-men will speak well of him.

"*Humph!* So much for the kings who have died. Now, here is the king who lives."

He pulled Magnus forward.

"He is little more than a babe, but he does not whimper when the arrow flight is hissing. It is my judgment that we can make of him a king who will be a fit successor to Ingi and Hakon, with the spirit of the one and the lusty vigor of the other. What I can do for him I will do, and I pledge my endeavor to rear him to be such a king as warriors will joy to follow."

"Skoal!" thundered the voices of the Thingmen, weapons rattling on shields. "Skoal, Magnus! Skoal, Fostri!"

When he could be heard again Erling put the question to them, whether Magnus was king, and they replied formally, without a dissenting voice, that the boy should be proclaimed king of all Norway—"by blood right, as lawful grandson of King Sigurd the Crusader, and by weapon right, as victor over Hakon, sole contender for the crown."

## XIII

AFTER the Eyra Thing had dispersed Erling stationed a garrison in Nidaros to hold the town for him, and journeyed south by land, receiving the allegiance of the lendermen. And while he was so engaged, Swain took a small host, and went to the uplands, and there harassed Jarl Sigurd and Olvir Rosta so sorely that most of the folk remaining to them were slain or fled away, and the chiefs were compelled to retire through the forests into Sweden.

Swain accounted himself unfortunate because he had been unable to bring either Olvir or Sigurd to cross swords with him, but Erling said that it did not matter, since both were thoroughly discredited in the land.

"What concerns me now," he said, "is the treaty I made with king Valdemar."

"Leave that to me," answered Swain.

Erling set up his court in Bergen, whence he could conveniently travel north, south or east, as circumstances might demand, and Swain dwelt with him. They did not hear from King Valdemar until autumn was at hand. Then a second embassy arrived in Bergen, with a letter announcing that the Danish King was ready to accept the jurisdiction over Viken which Erling had contracted to him.

Erling's face was white with anguish as a clerk read out the courteous, yet stern, wording of the letter.

"What can we do?" he cried to Swain. "I see no outlet but war, and that will not make Magnus the more popular with our people."

"No," assented Swain gruffly. "It would not, nor would the spreading of the knowledge of your foolishness in making such a treaty incline the Norsefolk to affection for you or your son."

"But what else is there to do?" insisted Erling.

"Two things," answered Swain with sudden energy. "In the first place, we will put off the Danes for a few weeks the while we hold a Thing of the Vikenfolk, and submit the question to them."

"What will that accomplish?"

"Why, the Vikenfolk will say that they will die sooner than submit to the Danes!"

"And then?" asked Erling doubtfully.

"Then you shall give their decision to Valdemar, asking him how he would derive any advantage from the possession of Viken, if the Vikenfolk were hostile to him? And to sweeten the purge, you shall offer him as much gold as you can afford to pay as recompense for the abandonment of his claim."

"That would furnish a good argument," assented Erling, "but how if Valdemar still refuses?"

"He probably will for a time," admitted Swain coolly, "but if he does you will have a strong claim upon the Norsefolk. Instead of being in the position of trying to give Viken to the Danes, you will be defending it against them."

The shadow lifted from Erling's brow.

"A shrewd plan," he exclaimed. "Yes, yes, Swain. I think you have found a knothole we can crawl through. Well, we will try it!"

AND the affair worked out very much as Swain had predicted. The Vikenfolk held a Thing in which they declared they would all die sooner than yield themselves to the Danes, and Swain took care that Erling should be represented to them only as a stanch defender of their rights as Norsemen.

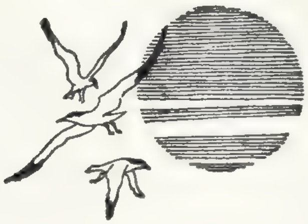
Valdemar's ambassadors were very wroth at such tidings, but their wrath was somewhat diminished when Erling offered them a good round sum of weighed gold in cancellation of Valdemar's claim.

They returned to Denmark, with this offer, and likewise as Swain had predicted, Valdemar at first refused to accept it. For several years he was hostile to Erling, and once he even undertook to seize Viken by force of arms; but Kristin, King Magnus's mother, gave warning of his coming, and the hostility of the Vikenfolk was so manifest that he did not persist in his effort. And as Erling declared that this attempt absolved him from any further payments, Valdemar had naught for the aid he lent Magnus's cause, save the money given his earlier ambassadors, which, indeed, was a fair price, reckoning by merchants' calculations.

So Magnus was safely established as king, and the land waxed rich and the people fat with the peace Swain and Erling had won.

Oddi the Little, who had a trick of making word jingles to describe great events, composed one which was quoted widely at this time:

First came Swain,
Then Hakon's bane.
And these twain
Wrought Magnus' gain.



# THE CAMP FIRE

## A Meeting Place for Readers, Writers and Adventurers

**Our Camp-Fire came into being May 5, 1912, with our June issue, and since then its fire has never died down. Many have gathered about it and they are of all classes and degrees, high and low, rich and poor, adventurers and stay-at-homes, and from all parts of the earth. Some whose voices we used to know have taken the Long Trail and are heard no more, but they are still memories among us, and new voices are heard, and welcomed.**

**We are drawn together by a common liking for the strong, clean things of out-of-doors, for word from the earth's far places, for man in action instead of caged by circumstance. The *spirit* of adventure lives in all men; the rest is chance.**

**But something besides a common interest holds us together. Somehow a real comradeship has grown up among us. Men can not thus meet and talk together without growing into friendlier relations; many a time does one of us come to the rest for facts and guidance; many a close personal friendship has our Camp-Fire built up between two men who had never met; often has it proved an open sesame between strangers in a far land.**

**Perhaps our Camp-Fire is even a little more. Perhaps it is a bit of leaven working gently among those of different station toward the fuller and more human understanding and sympathy that will some day bring to man the real democracy and brotherhood he seeks. Few indeed are the agencies that bring together on a friendly footing so many and such great extremes as here. And we are numbered by the hundred thousand now.**

**If you are come to our Camp-Fire for the first time and find you like the things we like, join us and find yourself very welcome. There is no obligation except ordinary manliness, no forms or ceremonies, no dues, no officers, no anything except men and women gathered for interest and friendliness. Your desire to join makes you a member.**

A SHOW-DOWN called for on the Sargasso Sea:

New York City.

I notice in "Camp-Fire" a clipping quoting an old salt about his adventures in the Sargasso Sea. Is there any such place as the Sargasso Sea? I have been across that part of the Atlantic but failed to note any extraordinarily heavy collection of seaweed. Ships running from New York to South African ports cross that portion of the ocean, but I have yet to hear of any one seeing anything out of the ordinary, newspaper interviews with Snug Harbor Ancient Mariners to the contrary notwithstanding.

Speaking of newspaper reports, in 1922 I made a voyage to India and on the way back, while traversing the Suez Canal, we had a couple of squalls. The sand, carried by the wind, was so thick that the pilot tied up to the bank for a few minutes until he could see to go on. No damage done except that the deck gang were busy for a while shoveling sand off the deck. You should have seen the article in one of the Phildelphia papers after we arrived there. It seems that, after fighting our way through a terrible sand-storm in the Red Sea, we found all the paint on the port side of the ship had been sandblasted off! Anybody who is interested enough can look it up in the files of one of the Philadelphia evening papers about the first of August, 1922. I have about come to the conclusion that news paper articles relating to ships or the sea are the old bunk.—EDW. D. BATES.

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COLCORD HEURLIN, whose painting is our cover for this issue, spent a large part of 1924 in Alaska, pretty well back from the edges of civilization. Getting color and all those things an artist ought to get, but finding a whole lot of time for hunting and knocking about generally.

The three-legged race for a relief cabin was an experience of my own last December with a soldier friend of mine. We spent three days in bed resulting from spending too many hours in going over Tompson's Pass. Mike Knowles claims that he actually saw and fired upon Caribou miraged in the sky, so I made a picture of this also for *Adventure*.—Colcord Heurlin.

OTHERS have replied to Dr. Mullikin's letter and will probably be drawn out of our cache for a later Camp-Fire:

Shoshoni, Wyoming.

That little clause in the letter of Mr. Mulliken, about the fellow that shot the head off a rattlesnake *while in the act of striking* was a little too much for me. I think that Mr. Mulliken surely did not mean that. He must have meant *while coiled for striking*. If there is an animal that I hate it is the rattlesnake.

IF YOU were in my line of business and had to carry a transit on your back across the sage brush and be on the watch, from the first of April until the first of October, almost every day, you would get to know something of their habits and be thoroughly familiar with their movements and what they can do. I have done this for 25-odd years and before that I've herded sheep and knew something about them. Some years ago I read a very interesting article by an investigator of the U. S. Agricultural Department on the habits of the rattlesnake, and if I remember correctly he had timed the strike of the snake at from 1-10 to 1-5 of a second. Not having the article at hand I might be in error, but the time was a small fraction of a second. McGovern, I think, holds the record for emptying a six-shooter, and his time of under two seconds was taken, I believe, while aiming and from the first shot. Now to believe that a man could take his gun from the holster, cock and shoot the head off a rattler while in the act of striking is something that I believe I would give a few hard earned dollars to see. I think that it would take a champion shot to hit the head of one, with the gun, at the aim, while the snake struck.—Edward L. Crabb.

P.S.—In my forty years in the West I have seen some of these gunmen and know how fast they can work, so Mr. Mulliken need not think that I am any tenderfoot about firearms.

FOLLOWING custom, Harvey J. Case, rises to introduce himself at Camp-Fire:

Ray, Arizona.

In pursuance with Camp-Fire custom in that the perpetrator of one's first story within the pages of *Adventure* shall stand up on his hind legs and introduce himself informally, I shall proceed to do so.

STARTING somewhere near the beginning, I was born in the late 90's in Prescott, Arizona. The subsequent months following this event are somewhat hazy in my memory but I am given to understand by proper authority that my conduct during that period was about what might have been expected. Grammar, high school, and college occupied my leisure time in the years following.

In college I undertook to learn something of mining engineering and by the grace of Providence and the charity of the faculty I emerged at the end of four years with a complete set of lofty ambitions and an imposing diploma (engraved) clutched tightly in my right hand. The passing years have shattered some of my fond illusions as to the profession, and the laurel wreath upon my brow is now somewhat dry and sere, but I have been carrying on and learning a little more of mining day by day as time passes.

AS TO experiences and adventures that have fallen to my lot, they have been such as one encounters off and on while engaged in underground work. The most recent occurred a month ago when we had a mine fire here underground, requiring three days of fire-fighting with oxygen apparatus before it could be brought under control. Let it be said that during those three days I gained a vast and wholesome respect for conflagrations of this character. Following my profession has acquainted me with southwestern Colorado (San Juan County), practically all the mining camps of Arizona, and parts of Old Mexico. As time passes I hope to see more of the out-of-the-way places I have always intended visiting.

The main character of "The Quest of the E. Pluribus," approaches, I believe, a composite of a certain type of old prospector and chlorider I have met in the worked-out mining camps of Colorado and Arizona. Perhaps you know him also. I hope you find him true to life. I should feel grateful to any of the Camp-Fire readers who might feel moved to drop me a line on their experiences and interesting people and things they have encountered among the mining camps and elsewhere. I look forward to meeting you again through the pages of *Adventure* in the future.—Harvey J. Case.

HUNGER, training horses, old stage-coach days—this comrade has three interesting things to talk to us about:

The Mexican News Bureau,
Washington, D. C.

In a recent number Talbot Mundy is responsible for a "solid chunk of wisdom" in his discussion of the statement that "hunger is the source of crime." That is the conclusion which I reached very early in life, when 17 years old to be exact, when I lurked for a couple of hours one bitter cold winter's night for an opportunity to "annex" a dried fish that swung in the outside doorway of a store in a Central New York village where I was stranded through no fault of my own and the inability to find work at my trade—that of a printer.

IN VARIOUS newspapers which I have had the "pleasure" of conducting since then, I have always maintained, as Mr. Mundy does, that the Government (National, State, county or municipal), should at all times provide some sort of useful public work where a penniless man willing and able to labor could earn enough to feed himself and those dependent upon him, if any. The wage should not be so large as to tempt a man to refuse or not to seek other employment, but just enough to maintain him until a better job can be found. At the same time the destitute man willing to beg but not to work for his food (and there are too many such), should be forced to endure hunger until ready to give a *quid pro quo* in return therefor.

I have always been a firm believer in the adage that "He who doth not work, neither shall he eat." But he that is willing to work should certainly be afforded an opportunity to earn his food. The destitute must be fed at the expense of society somehow, since we have not yet reached the point of chloroforming them wholesale, so why not adopt Mr. Mundy's suggestion? His and my own ideas on this point are not popular and usually elicit ridicule, but that does not detract from their truth.

NOW as to breaking horses, whether by the use of violent or of gentle methods. "Bill Gianella of Chico" might well have illustrated his advocacy of the "gentling" process by citing the case of the famous Palo Alto horse-breeding establishment maintained in California by the late Senator Leland Stanford, and not so far from Chico. It was an inflexible and rigidly maintained rule in that extensive affair that no hasty or violent words should ever be spoken to any of the animals or used in their presence, from foaling to maturity or subsequently, and above all else that no blow of any kind should ever be administered to any animal, no matter what the possible or fancied provocation. Any employe violating either of these rules was "given his time" on the spot. As a result, none of the colts bred and raised at Palo Alto ever required "breaking" as it is generally known. All were "gentled" from birth.

It was an admirable exhibition of the results of such treatment to have a horse of whatever age approach a visitor from behind, so quietly that the stranger was unaware of the proximity until he felt a velvet-like nose nuzzling his shoulder and asking politely for further acquaintance. That was my own experience one morning when standing in a paddock at Palo Alto with two or three score of the fine blooded animals moving leisurely about. No one who knows of the eminence attained by Palo Alto stock needs any argument to convince him of the superiority of the gentle training system over the horse-breaking cruelties of all too many trainers, more especially of the old school.

MR. LOWDERMILK'S remarks on old-time teaming and stage-coaching arouse many vivid recollections in my mind. My earliest experience in travel by "thoroughbrace" Concord coach (barring some infantile ones in the wilds of Michigan back in the middle fifties), was some fifty years ago, when I crossed the Bakersfield Plain, the Tehachapi Mountains and the Mojave Desert in ante-railroad times in a vehicle of the kind mentioned, drawn by six horses or mules as the case might be when changes were made.

I was a tenderfoot of the tenderest kind, having arrived in California only a few days previous after a thirty-day trip by water from New York. My fellow-passengers were all old-time Californians, as soon appeared. We all became acquainted in a few minutes, as is customary with *real* Westerners, and all sorts of topics were discussed and commented upon. I was enjoying the novel experiences to the utmost and occasionally asked a question or made a remark. After several hours' journey and when a lull came in the conversation, one of the passengers, to whom I had been attracted by his genial, hearty manner, turned to me and said:

"Well, young fellow, this must be your first stage trip in California."

I acknowledged the conclusion to be correct.

"Yes," he said. "I knew that you were a stranger here and had not been in the country very long. I had three reasons for knowing it."

"Yes? What are they? I shall be glad to know how you could tell I was a new arrival."

"All right! Where's your blankets?" he shot at me.

"Blankets! What blankets? I haven't any blankets?" I replied, somewhat mystified.

"Yes, I knew it! I saw you had none. But didn't you notice this morning that every one of us, before we got into the coach, put a roll of blankets into the boot either in front or behind the stage?"

"Yes, I did, and I wondered at it."

"Well, before we reach Los Angeles you will find out all about it. No man who knows this country ever starts on a trip where he will be out all night, especially in a stage-coach, without taking a couple or three thick blankets with him. You'll find out why before tomorrow morning!"

SURE enough, I *did* find out! The constant pitching of the coach, like a vessel at sea, had made me sick, just as I had been nearly the entire journey from New York, and toward evening I sought a seat outside and was given one on the roof of the coach, behind and above the driver and the "shotgun messenger." Before leaving the station where I had made the change, a curious looking, heavy, wooden, iron-bound and brass-padlocked box or chest was passed up and placed on the seat by my side, being made fast with some baling rope to the iron rail of the roof. Then said the driver:

"Say, young fellow, if you fall asleep in the night and wake up by the stage stopping, and if you hear some one yelling 'Throw down that box, you ——!' you just untie that rope or cut it and chuck that box overboard just as quick as God Almighty will let you!"

I did not have to "chuck" the chest down, but afterward I learned that it was a Wells-Fargo treasure box and contained a shipment of gold bullion from a distant mine, as well as other valuables. The redoubtable and still unkilled bandit Vasquez, a survival of the old Joaquin Murrietta days, was in the habit of holding up stages which he suspected were carrying such valuable shipments, and was notorious for the painfully careless manner in which he handled his fire-arms.

FORTUNATELY for me, this proved to be one of the bandit's "nights off," and we were not molested. But cold—bitter cold—it was up there on the hurricane deck of the stage. It had been warm and sunny as only an early California spring day can be, until after sundown. But from the mountain cañons and foothills "draws" came breezes and winds that grew colder and colder as the night passed. Though clad in the habiliments that had been amply sufficient in a cold New York winter, I soon began to shiver, shivered still more, and kept on shivering, and so passed a most uncomfortable night, learning to the fullest the necessity and desirability for providing one's self with blankets—something I never afterward neglected in the extended travels and experiences of upward of fifty years in California and in Mexico.

But to continue: After the blanket episode the old-timer said:

"THAT was the first reason for my certainty that you are a tenderfoot. Here's the second: Several times this morning we have passed large numbers of sheep feeding on the fresh grass and you spoke of them as being 'large flocks.' Now we don't have any flocks of anything in California. All we have is 'bands.' We have bands of horses, bands of cattle, bands of sheep, bands of goats, bands of men, and even bands of pretty girls. So when we hear any one talking about flocks of this, that or the other, we know he is a tenderfoot."

"All right! You said there were three reasons why you knew that I was a new arrival. What is the next one?"

"Well, young fellow, the next one is the surest proof of all. We have stopped to change horses three times since we started this morning."

"Yes—what about it?"

"Why, what did you do while the changes were going on?"

"I watched the hostlers changing the animals. They were so wild and unruly that it was great fun to see how well they were handled and hitched to the stage."

"Yes, so it was—so it was. But what did the rest of us do?"

"Why, I don't know. Oh, yes—I remember. You all went into the stage station for something or other."

"Yes, that is so. And if you had not been a tenderfoot, you would have jumped off the stage almost before it stopped, as we did, rushed inside the station, put your belly up against the bar and called for some good red liquor to wash the dust out of your throat, just as we did! That is my third and best reason for knowing beyond a doubt that you are a tenderfoot!"

I acknowledge the correctness of the reasoning, and after this initiating trip, as it might be called, I never erred in respect to any of the three customs noted—even the last.

I MIGHT talk about stagecoach experiences almost indefinitely. I might tell about the Chinaman that was literally shaken and jarred to death by not knowing how to "hold himself" over an exceedingly rough road; I might tell about how, fastened tightly in a stagecoach during a heavy rainstorm, in company with my wife, we literally crawled across a decrepit old bridge high above a roaring, rocky torrent, only to have it crash to the bottom a hundred feet below within a few minutes after we had passed, ours having been the last team that crossed. I might tell of the stage driver who was forced at the point of a gun to stop his outfit, loaded with passengers, at midnight on the bank of an angry stream, swollen with the winter's rains and into which he proposed driving, only to find when morning came that the bank had been washed out and that there was a straight drop of fifteen feet where the road had entered the stream. But this is enough for this time.

NOW let me get one thing more "off my chest" and I will quit—for this once. Many authors of frontier stories fall into errors which seem ridiculous to those who really know their frontier. One of the most glaring of these is of rather common occurrence and I have wondered that it has not been challenged. I refer to the frequent accounts of cowboys walking into private or public buildings, into Pullman cars, and even into hotels in large Eastern cities, and remaining there for extended periods with their spurs "jingling at their heels."

It is almost fifty years since I received my first introduction to and instructions in the etiquette of the frontier "touchin' on and appertainin' to" the proper method of wearing one's spurs. Like every other tenderfoot, I was very much enamored of the rattling of my spur chains on the wooden stirrups then in use, as also of their jingling on the plank sidewalks in town and on wooden floors as I walked about. But my instructor, a gray-haired old cattleman, told me that there was nothing so indicative of the un-indurated character of the integuments of one's pedal extremities as the manner of wearing one's spurs. If he were a real, sure-enough cattleman or cowboy, always when dismounting for more than a casual brief visit to the post-office, a saloon or other places where the necessaries of life were dispensed, he first tied his horse to a hitching-rack, with a slipknot that could be released instantaneously by one quick jerk of the end of the halter rope, then removed his spurs, looped the chains over the saddle-horn, and then went about his business sans the jingling spurs of the romancer.

I NEVER forgot my first lesson in this bit of etiquette. No honest-to-goodness cowboy was ever guilty of wearing his spurs when dismounted, except of course on the range when engaged in mixed foot and saddle work with stock. But in town, in store, in saloon, in houses, on trains, in hotels, or wherever else of like character, spurs were eschewed, while to wear them in such places and under such conditions was an absolute demonstration that the wearer belonged to the tenderfoot class. And I am quite sure the same practise prevails today.

Of course, the movie cowboy wears his spurs and his "chaps" at all times and under any and all circumstances, even at a dance, and probably even when he goes to bed! A great many writers appear to have acquired their "knowledge" of frontier customs mostly from the "movies," which are replete with solecisms that excite the risibilities and the ridicule of any one who knows, or rather knew, the frontier.—GEO. F. WEEKS.

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WITH joy I lean back and listen to comrade E. E. Harriman of "A. A." and our writers' brigade defend himself against misinterpretation of his remarks at a previous Camp-Fire. It's grand hearing. Out of so many of us there are naturally always a few who read carelessly or misinterpret. Yea, comrade Harriman, I've been getting 'em for a dozen years or so and I'm just hard-hearted enough to sit back and listen to some one else tell 'em about it. Go to it and here's luck. Your position as stated is sound, but make 'em see it. Incidentally some of 'em have just been calling me down for backing up Talbot Mundy's opinions of Julius Cæsar, whereas I not only didn't but expressly stated I didn't. Go to it, comrade. This is a great and happy day for me.

As to Indian *vs* white, well, after all the arguing is done we can take a look at the cold old fact that, however superior morally we whites may be, we somehow now hold the land that was once theirs. Argue away that little old fact, somebody. By some other argument than that we *ought* to have it because we're superior to them. No, no, comrade Harriman, I'm not taking sides against you. There are lots of good whites and lots of bad Indians and maybe as a whole the Indians are as bad as we, but are we any better morally than they?

Camp-Fire boys, I am with you again on two points. First, one of you is moved to ask "Why call it a six-gun when every one knows it carries only five shells, as the hammer is on an empty chamber?"

I do not know that I am quoting him verbatim, but I have the meaning. Now I want to tell the lad that I have never yet packed my gun with one chamber empty. I never did with the old cap-and-ball gun I used as a boy. I never did when I graduated into the S. & W. pocket .38 class. I never have with either my .32-.20 S. & W. or my .45 Colt New Service. In fact, I never saw it done by anybody until within the last twenty-five years. We took a chance with the old guns. Now my .32-.20 has a sliding anvil on which the lower extension of the hammer rests. My Colt .45 New Service has an automatic, sliding safety.

You can hammer the hammer on either gun and not force the firing pin in contact with the primer. My guns are six-guns and no less.

THE second point is merely to remark that the anti-whiteman boys are proving my previous contention, that they consider only the white who is greedy, dishonest and heartless, not acknowledging that there are real Americans of another class. Even my friend Goodsill has to fire a salvo on that side. I tell you fellows again that I know hundreds, thousands, of Americans who would redress the wrongs of the Indian if they could. You don't believe it, but it is true.

My entire plea was for simple, ordinary justice to the white. I made no charges against the redman. I only said there were bad as well as good, just as there are bad whitemen as well as good. Everybody ignores three-fourths of what I wrote and yells about the third that is supposed to be contingent upon and relative to the rest.

Isn't there any sense of square dealing in the anti-white side? If there is, why hammer me over something I did not say?

LET me quote and you men who have it in for me because you neither read carefully nor remembered an important part of my letter, read my quotation with care and study it a little.

"First, I have no defense to offer for the many instances wherein degenerate, conscienceless whites have robbed, maltreated and abused the Indian and negro. Had I my will in such cases as where the agent fixed three weeks in which the tribe might file on lands, in his office, then went off on a hunt and was gone until the allotted time had expired, letting his friends come in and grab the best land, he would be hanged."

Is that plain? Can any of you men find any defense of the white in it? Or any slam at the Indian? No, you can not.

Then I go on to say that what I object to is pitting the best aborigine against the worst whiteman and I ask justice for the white.

EVERY man who has taken the matter up has chosen to assail me as though I were upholding the crooks and abusing the Indian. There is neither truth nor justice in such an attack. I have kept still, hoping some man who could read and remember what he read, would put the mob right in this matter, but I guess I must go it alone.

All right. I will just do that thing. Above is what I wrote and what appeared in *Adventure*. Where you men who hop on me got hold of anything to justify your "hops" I do not know. Not from my letter.

It begins to look as though my plea for ordinary justice failed to find soil where justice grows. Everybody ignores my encomium of Chaska and Wabashaw and Chief Joseph. They assume that I hate Indians because I tell the truth about Little Crow, who was a brutal fratricide, a cruel beast and hated by most of his own tribe.

All right, boys, if you get any satisfaction out of twisting words and reading sentences backward, go to it. The text upholds me, whether you do or not.—E. E. Harriman.

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JUST as Farnham Bishop says, it would be difficult to get the basic facts of the complete novel in this issue accepted even as plausible fiction if presented merely as fiction. Yet there seems little doubt that there really was such a "pirate" colony as that described and, as you'll see from Mr. Bishop's letter, the most astounding conditions and events pictured in the story are taken from the pages of history.

Berkeley, California.

All that I know about Libertatia, I read in a delectable little leather-bound book, whose time-stained title-page reads as follows:

"The History of the Lives and Bloody Exploits of the Most Noted *PIRATES*; their TRIALS AND EXECUTIONS, including a correct account of the LATE PIRACIES committed in the West Indies, and the expedition of Commodore Porter; also, those committed on the brig *Mexican*, who were tried and executed at Boston, in 1835. *'Omne tulit punctum, qui miscuit utile dulci.'*—Horace. EMBELLISHED WITH ENGRAVINGS FROM ORIGINAL DESIGNS. Hartford, Ct.; Published by Ezra Strong, 1835."

No author's name is given, probably because nine-tenths of the book appears to have been taken from

Captain Charles Johnson's "General History of the Pyrates," London, 1724, to which has been added a forty-six page appendix dealing with the "late piracies committed in the West Indies."

CAPTAIN MISSON'S life is the first and Captain Tew's the fourth biography in this volume. Between them they give the entire history of Libertatia from Misson's birth in Provence to his death off Cape Infantes. By the way, where is Cape Infantes? Apparently, it was somewhere on the East or West Coast of Africa, but so far I have been unable to find it on any map.

No fiction writer would dare to invent such things as pirates enacting a law against swearing, establishing a public school, and organizing a Parliament. I found all these things in the little leather-bound book, together with the dockyard, the Black Musketeers, the two princesses and Caraccioli. To make a plot, I rearranged the order of certain events, and added some fiction. For instance, the organization of the Parliament took place after the attack by the Portuguese squadron, not before.

*Lord Mornington*, *Fairfax*, and *Lucy* are made up out of whole cloth. Misson, it appears, did rescue the crew and passengers of a sinking East Indiaman and treated them as humanely as he did his prisoners. All I did was to place a typically base and greedy politician of the period in Libertatia and let him work out his own destiny.

MY LOCAL color is a blend of Professor Keller's "Madagascar," Robert Drury's "Journal," Defoe's "King of the Pirates," and Colonel J. Biddulph's "Pirates of Malabar." The storm and shipwreck in the opening pages are cribbed from Captain Inglefield's official report of the loss of *H.M.S. Centaur*, 74, in 1782.

I have followed Colonel Biddulph, and most historians of Madagascar, in locating Libertatia on the shore of Diego Suarez Bay. Just where and just when it was, no man can say. I arbitrarily chose 1713, because that was the close of the War of the Spanish Succession, when many a privateersman found himself out of employment and so went a-pirating. Since the action between the *Victoire* and the *Winchelsea* must have taken place during some period of hostilities between France and England, not later than 1724, while the mention of the pirate Avery as Misson's contemporary forbids our placing him earlier than 1700, the only war available is the great one from 1700 to 1713. This suggested the two Flanders veterans, *Lieutenant Harry Fairfax* and *Sergeant Amos Horn*. According to the book, the drill-sergeant of the Black Musketeers was a Frenchman.

IF ANY one objects that the Libertatians are not typical pirates, I will most heartily agree with him. They did not regard themselves as pirates at all, but as citizens of the only free republic, waging war against a world of tyrants. They had something like patriotism and something like a religion. Eighteenth century deism may seem a thin and tasteless sort of creed to us today, but it provided a moral cement that was utterly lacking in the make-up of the ordinary pirate crew, held together mainly by love of plunder and fear of Execution Dock. Fear of their captain kept men from betraying a brute like Blackbeard, but Misson and Caraccioli could trust their followers because they themselves were loyal Libertatians, fighting "for God and Liberty."—FARNHAM BISHOP.

P.S.—Here is the sequel of the story, as given in the book. Unlike my version, some of the Frenchmen seem to have been on the sloop that survived the storm.

"Tew continued his course for America and arrived at Rhode Island without any accident. His men dispersed themselves, as they thought fit, and Tew sent to Bermuda, for his owner's account, fourteen times the value of their sloop; and not being questioned by any, lived in great tranquillity. The French belonging to Misson took different routes, one of them dying at Rochelle. The French manuscript of Misson's life was found among his papers, and transmitted to me by a friend and correspondent.

"Capt. Tew lived unquestioned. He had an easy fortune, and designed to live quietly at home; but those of his men, who lived near him, having squandered their shares, were continually soliciting him to take another trip. He withstood their request a considerable time; but they having got together (by report they made of the vast riches to be acquired) a number of resolute fellows, they, in a body, begged him to head them but for one voyage. They were so earnest in their desire that he could not refuse complying. They prepared a small sloop, and made the best of their way to the straits entering the Red Sea, where they met with, and attacked a ship belonging to the Great Mogul. In the engagement, a shot carried away the rim of Tew's belly, who held his bowels with his hands some small space. When he dropped, it struck such a terror in his men, that they suffered themselves to be taken without further resistance."

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BACK to 1922—some letters from our cache. Mr. Brooke's letter was passed on to Messrs. Brodeur, Huston, Lamb and Pendexter. The last named doubtless replied, as always, but his letter was not found with the others.

Winona, Kansas.

I want to introduce myself as one of the charter members of the *Adventure* family. I read the first number ever published, the one that had the first *Sled Wheeler* story in it. Since then, I have missed only one number of the magazine.

NOW, to start with, I want to disclaim any superior knowledge and state that this letter is purely for the purpose of gaining information. The front cover of the April 30, 1922, issue shows the left fore-arm, right hand and bow and arrow of what is apparently an American Indian archer. Now, what I want to know is, did any one ever know of an Indian using the method of arrow release employed by the archer in this picture?

There are three, according to some authorities, or four, in the view of others, distinct methods of arrow release commonly employed. They are the primary release, the secondary release, which by many is regarded merely as a variant of the primary, the Mongolian release and the Mediterranean release. The primary release is the one commonly employed by children or savages in a very rudimentary state of culture; the arrow is pinched between the thumb and forefinger and the release is effected by merely spreading thumb and forefinger apart. In the secondary release the archer gains additional power in drawing the bow by pulling on the bow-string with the first joints of the second and third fingers. The Mongolian release is the one used by the Japanese, Tatars, Chinese and all of that ethnic stock; in it the arrow is gripped between the first and second finger and the string is pulled by the thumb. The Mediterranean release is the one used by the white race generally and particularly by the old English archers; in this release the arrow is gripped between the first and second fingers and the first joint of the first three fingers pulls on the bow-string. This is the method used by the archer on the cover design in question.

ALL three methods of release are illustrated in the Webster's International Dictionary under the subject of arrow release. Now, it has always been my impression that the American Indian always used the secondary release as described above. I have always had more or less of a flair for ancient and medieval weapons and armor and particularly for the long bow and the arbalest or crossbow. As a kid I had a good many bows ranging from a hickory stick to a genuine yew bow made by Highfield in London. My first lessons in archery were from my father, who in turn learned from a half-breed Winnebago Indian. He taught me the secondary release, although later I learned and employed the Mediterranean release. I have seen quite a few Indians use a bow and they all used the secondary release.

I would like to know from Hugh Pendexter and Frank H. Huston whether the Indian ever used the Mediterranean release. Also how the range and power of the Indian bow compared with a seventy-pound long-bow, and whether the Indian was ever a good shot with a bow. Of course, in this day, the bow means nothing to an Indian and only a few kids ever use them. I used to live near the Musquakl reservation in Tama County, Iowa, and twenty-five years ago some of the old bucks would occasionally shoot at a mark with a bow and arrow, but they were rotten shots, their arrows crooked and their bows very crude.

Then I should like to hear from Harold Lamb as to how the Mongolian archers compared with the English longbowmen, both as to range and accuracy.

THERE is also another question I should like to ask of Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur and that is what kind of bow were his Saxons using in his stories the "Murkwood Spears" and "For the Crown." I do not believe they could have been using the long-bow. The Saxons as a race were feeble archers before the conquest. The disastrous defeat of Harold at Hastings was caused by Norman archery.

The Normans, however, did not use the long-bow at Hastings. The pictures of the archers on the Bayeux tapestry show them using the short bow, probably the same as the Danish sea bow. The long-bow did not become the typical weapon of the English yeoman until the reign of Edward I. The origin of the long-bow seems to be rather mysterious although it is now believed that it originated in South Wales and it was experience with the Welsh archers under Strongbow, conqueror of Dublin, which influenced the Anglo-Norman kings to make the practise of archery compulsory with their subjects some seventy-five or one hundred years after the time of Stephen. I believe that the archery contest between *Locksley* and *Hubert* in "Ivanhoe" is an anachronism, as is the archery in Mr. Brodeur's stories. Please do not construe any of the foregoing as being a criticism.

I know this is a very lengthy screed but I have read *Adventure* now for nearly fourteen years without erupting and promise a similar long silence after getting this out of my system.—B. W. BROOKE.

THE replies follow:

San Diego, California.

You do me proud when you consider me an authority on Indians, but I do not claim to be such. It is true I have Indian blood in me "way back," also that off and on from '66-7 to '81 I lived with the Plains tribes as one of them and have eaten and slept with Apaches (all kinds), Popogas, Yokis, Sirivashes, Piutes, Redwoods, Diggers and Cocopus, mebbe a few others that I forget. Now in the old days (I speak only of the Plains) every buck carried a bow in addition to a fire-arm (when he could get the latter) preferring it when obtaining food on a scout or horse-stealing expedition for obvious reasons.

ALSO in hunting buffalo. These critters were not killed outright; the idea was to drive an arrow into the lungs, and the congestion would cause the animal to stop, lie down and suffocate. Generally had several bows, one or two of them "strong" bows for heavy hunting and war and cared for like a boy's first colt or a man's first flivver. I never could bend one, and I could lift a three hundred pound barrel of sugar above my head. It is a knack. Those made of strips of buffalo horn, or *bais darc*, reinforced with buffalo horn, the strongest and most prized. Each man put his personal mark on arrows.

Limit of range, about three hundred yards maximum; average, one hundred yards; good shot at these ranges the exception; at close range better than a muzzle or single-shot breech-loader.

Held three or four arrows in fingers that held bow, and fourth in air before first hit mark or fell to ground.

Secondary grip always—even kids with blunt head shafts, but I think it was between second joints, pretty sure it was. Shot from chest, ear, side of eye, and hip according to circumstances. Yes, it was second joints, a quick draw and release; never saw one aim as a New Yorker does with a "taggit pistol." The whang an arrow released was a pleasing sound unless you were in front of the shaft; the missile made a soft swishing *whoosh* impossible for me to describe in words.

Incidentally I never saw an Indian "throw" a lance, always jabbed with them.

I think the boomerang used by the Diggers in South California would interest you, smaller than the Aussi article and no "come back" to them. I saw them used within fifteen miles of here as late as twenty-five years ago.—FRANK H. HUSTON, Ta Sunka Mamji.

New York City.

I was greatly interested in your remarks on archery, British and Mongolian. As it happens, one of my tales, just in the process of completion, deals with the fortunes of an English archer among the Mongols in the early Thirteenth Century.

In reading the annals of the Mongols—or rather the histories of other nations that deal with the Mongols, for they left few written records of their own—I've gleaned only fragmentary ideas of the use of the bow by the Mongols. It was their favorite weapon, and was of vast importance in winning victories. They used—in the time of Genghis Khan—a heavier bow than the Chinese, Persians or Turks. Fighting invariably from horseback, they were able to outmaneuver and outrange their adversaries. More than once they dealt decisively with elephants; the quilted armor of the Chinese did not serve to stop their shafts; or linked mail of a single thickness.

I gathered that the Mongols were accurate to considerable distances with their short, powerful bows; they had a habit of bringing down chosen warriors of the enemy with shots in the eye and throat. I remember one incident where a khan of the Tatar Horde sent as presents before battle, a very heavy bow and silver arrow to his enemy, a Turk (for which read Persian or Kankali or Kurd, at pleasure) with the remark that such bows were very strong and such arrows shot a long way. The Turks could not handle the weapon.

History does not record the English archers ever opposing the Mongols in or around the Holy Land. It is most probably the case that an English yeoman *with the long-bow* could send a shaft further, and more accurately than a Mongol (*all* Mongols were archers). It is doubtful if he could send shafts more swiftly from the bow, or work greater execution at close quarters. And as for comparing them mounted——

A reasonably good archer of the Horde could set his horse to a gallop, discharge three arrows at a mark—such as a spear stuck upright in the plain—unstring his bow, use it as a whip, string it, and shoot another three shafts, behind his back after he passed the mark.

All of which brings us to the conclusion that at the butts the English yeomen would outshoot the Mongols; also that a regiment of the same English archers would have small chance of holding their own against an equal number of Mongols in open warfare. Remember when the Mongol Horde ran up against the Russians, Poles, Teutons, Huns (Hungarians) at the Danube?—Harold Lamb.

University of California, Berkeley, California.

You've caught me in a whale of an error. I was sure that I was right in representing peasants of Stephen's time as using the long-bow; but when I received your inquiries I looked the matter up and found that, as you say, the first English experiment with the long-bow was Strongbow's; and he used Welsh archers. The first great English victory with that weapon seems to have been that of Falkirk. The bow used by the Normans at Hastings was the shorter elm bow, drawn to the breast, which they inherited from their Scandinavian ancestors.

So I stand convicted of a gross anachronism; and I've always prided myself on my fidelity to history. I could easily have checked up on the matter by looking it up before writing "Murkwood Spears"—incidentally, the error was mine, and was not committed by Mr. Bishop—but the long-bow was one of the things I just naturally took for granted. Perhaps it was the influence of Scott, perhaps just mental looseness. In any case I'm very grateful to you for calling my attention to the error. I'm sending a carbon of this letter to Mr. Hoffman, hoping he'll insert my confession in "Camp-Fire." I don't like to see false doctrine get by—especially when I'm responsible for it.

Let me ask you a counter-question: When you say—speaking of the Mediterranean release—that "the first joint of the first three fingers pulls on the bow string," do you mean that the string was actually plucked rather than softly released? If you mean this, then you are at variance with Conan Doyle, who did the most careful research for his "White Company" that I have ever known done for an historical novel. You may very well be right; I'd just like to know. You will recall that Doyle has his master-bowman censure a man for plucking.

There's no excuse for my error, but I'm glad of it just the same, since it is just such exchanges of knowledge and criticism that bring out the facts and add greatly to the interest of writing as well as reading.—Arthur G. Brodeur.

And from comrade Joseph E. Ward comes a quarterly bulletin of the Nebraska State Historical Society containing the following:

The University of California has just published a thorough, scientific study of bows and arrows written by Saxton Pope. The book is abundantly illustrated and gives description of ancient bows and arrows and comparisons of them with American Indian bows and arrows. A few interesting facts regarding the distances shot by arrows from different bows, the result of careful tests in California:

An Osage Indian bow, 92 yards; an Apache Indian bow, 120 yards; a Black Foot Indian bow, 145 yards; a Cheyenne Indian bow, 165 yards; a Yaqui Indian bow (from Mexico), 210 yards; an English long-bow, 250 yards.

Arrows from the English long-bow have been sent clear through an inch of solid oak.

We are trying to get the University of California book to see whether bits of it wouldn't make good hearing at Camp-Fire.—A. S. H.

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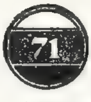

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**55. Western U. S. Part 4 Mont. and the Northern Rocky Mountains**
Fred W. Egleston, Editor, *Bozeman Courier*, Bozeman, Mont. Agriculture, mining, northwestern oil-fields, hunting, fishing, camping, automobile tours, guides, early history.

**56. Western U. S. Part 5 Idaho and Surrounding Country**
R. T. Newman, Box 833, Anaconda, Mont. Camping, shooting, fishing, equipment, information on expeditions, history and inhabitants.

**57. Western U. S. Part 6 Tex. and Okla.**
J. W. Whiteaker, 1505 W. 10th St., Austin, Tex. Minerals, agriculture, travel, topography, climate, hunting, history, industries.

**58. Middle Western U. S. Part 1 The Dakotas, Neb., Ia., Kan.**
Joseph Mills Hanson, care *Adventure*. Hunting, fishing, travel. Especially, early history of Missouri Valley.

**59. Middle Western U. S. Part 2 Mo. and Ark.**
John B. Thompson ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*. Also the Missouri Valley up to Sioux City, Iowa. Wilder countries of the Ozarks, and swamps; hunting, fishing, trapping, farming, mining and range lands; big-timber sections.

**60. Middle Western U. S. Part 3 Ind., Ill., Mich., Wis., Minn. and Lake Michigan**
John B. Thompson ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*. Fishing, clamming, hunting, trapping, lumbering, canoeing, camping, guides, outfits, motoring, agriculture, minerals, natural history, early history, legends.

**61. Middle Western U. S. Part 4 Mississippi River**
Geo. A. Zerr, Vine and Hill Sts., Crafton P. O., Ingram, Pa. Routes, connections, itineraries; all phases of river steamer and power-boat travel; history and idiosyncrasies of the river and its tributaries. Questions regarding methods of working one's way should be addressed to Mr. Spears. (*See next section* 62.)

**62. Middle Western U. S. Part 5 Great Lakes**
H. C. Gardner, 1909 Stout St., Denver, Colo. Seamanship, navigation, courses and distances, reefs and shoals, lights and landmarks, charts; laws, fines, penalties; river navigation.

**63. Eastern U. S. Part 1 Miss., O., Tenn., Michigan and Hudson Valleys, Great Lakes, Adirondacks**
Raymond S. Spears, Box 843, Inglewood, Calif. Automobile, motor-cycle, bicycle and pedestrian touring; shanty-boating, river-tripping; outfit suggestions, including those for the transcontinental trails; game, fish and woodcraft; furs, fresh-water pearls, herbs.

**64. Eastern U. S. Part 2 Motor-Boat and Canoe Cruising on Delaware and Chesapeake Bays and Tributary Rivers**
Howard A. Shannon, care of *Adventure*. Motor-boat equipment and management. Oystering, crabbing, eeling, black bass, pike, sea-trout, croakers; general fishing in tidal waters. Trapping and trucking on Chesapeake Bay. Water fowl and upland game in Maryland and Virginia. Early history of Delaware, Virginia and Maryland.

**65. Eastern U. S. Part 3 Marshes and Swamplands of the Atlantic Coast from Philadelphia to Jacksonville**
Howard A. Shannon, care of *Adventure*. Okefinokee and Dismal, Okranoke and the Marshes of Glynn; Croatan Indians of the Carolinas. History, traditions, customs, hunting, modes of travel, snakes.

**66. Eastern U. S. Part 4 Southern Appalachians**
William R. Barbour, care *Adventure*. Alleghanies, Blue Ridge, Smokies, Cumberland Plateau, Highland Rim. Topography, climate, timber, hunting and fishing, automobiling, national forests, general information.

**67. Eastern U. S. Part 5 Tenn., Ala., Miss., N. and S. C., Fla. and Ga.**
Hapsburg Liebe, Box 1419 S. W. Fifth St., Miami, Fla. Except Tennessee River and Atlantic seaboard. Hunting, fishing, camping; logging, lumbering, sawmilling, saws.

**68. Eastern U. S. Part 6. Western Maine**
Dr. G. E. Hathorne, 70 Main Street, Bangor, Me. For all territory *west* of the Penobscot river. Fishing, hunting, canoeing, guides, outfits, supplies.

**69. Eastern U. S. Part 7 Eastern Maine**
H. B. Stanwood, East Sullivan, Me. For all territory *east* of the Penobscot River. Hunting, fishing, canoeing, mountaineering, guides; general information.

**70. Eastern U. S. Part 8 Vt., N. H., Conn., R. I., and Mass.**
Howard R. Voight, 35 Dawson Ave., West Haven, Conn. Fishing, hunting, travel, roads; business conditions, history.

**71, Eastern U. S. Part 9 New Jersey**
Francis H. Bent, Farmingdale, N. J. Topography, hunting, fishing; automobile routes; history; general information.

**72. Eastern U. S. Part 10 Maryland**
Laurence Edmund Allen, 201 Bowery Ave., Frostburg, Md. Mining, touring, summer resorts, historical places, general information.

### A.—Radio

Donald McNicol, 132 Union Road, Roselle Park, N. J. Telegraphy, telephony, history, broadcasting, apparatus, invention, receiver construction, portable sets.

### B.—Mining and Prospecting

Victor Shaw, Box 958, Ketchikan, Alaska. Territory anywhere on the continent of North America. Questions on mines, mining law, mining, mining methods or practise where and how to prospect, how to outfit; how to make the mine after it is located; how to work it and how to sell it; general geology necessary for miner or prospector, including the precious and base metals and economic minerals such as pitchblende or uranium, gypsum, mica, cryolite, etc. Questions regarding investment or the merits of any particular company are excluded.

### C.—Old Songs That Men Have Sung

A department for collecting hitherto unpublished specimens and for answering questions concerning all songs of the out-of-doors that have had sufficient virility to outlast their immediate day; chanteys, "forebitters," ballads—songs of outdoor men—sailors, lumberjacks, soldiers, cowboys, pioneers, rivermen, canal-men, men of the Great Lakes, voyageurs, railroad men, miners, hoboes, plantation hands, etc.—R. W. Gordon, 4 Conant Hall, Cambridge, Mass.

### D.—Weapons, Past and Present

Rifles, shotguns, pistols, revolvers, ammunition and edged weapons. (Any questions on the arms adapted to a particular locality should *not* be sent to this department but to the "Ask Adventure" editor covering the district.)

**1.—All Shotguns, including foreign and American makes; wing shooting.** John B. Thompson ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*.

**2.—All Rifles, Pistols and Revolvers, including foreign and American makes.** Donegan Wiggins, R. F. D. 3, Lock Box 75, Salem, Ore.

**3.—Edged Weapons, and Firearms Prior to 1800.** Swords, pikes, knives, battle-axes, etc., and all firearms of the flintlock, matchlock, wheel-lock and snaphaunce varieties. Lewis Appleton Barker, 40 University Road, Brookline, Mass.

### E.—Salt and Fresh Water Fishing

John B. Thompson ("Ozark Ripley"), care of *Adventure*. Fishing-tackle and equipment; fly and bait casting and bait; camping-outfits; fishing-trips.

### F.—Forestry in the United States

Ernest W. Shaw, South Carver, Mass. Big-game hunting, guides and equipment; national forests of the Rocky Mountain States. Questions on the policy of the Government regarding game and wild-animal life in the Forests.

### G.—Tropical Forestry

William R. Barbour, care *Adventure*. Tropical forests and forest products; their economic possibilities; distribution, exploration, etc.

### H.—Aviation

Lieut.-Col. W. G. Schauffler, Jr., 2940 Newark St., N. W., Washington, D. C. Airplanes; airships; aeronautical motors; airways and landing fields; contests; Aero Clubs; insurance; aeronautical laws; licenses; operating data; schools; foreign activities; publications. No questions answered regarding aeronautical stock-promotion companies.

### I.—Army Matters, United States and Foreign

Fred. F. Fleischer, care *Adventure. United States:* Military history, military policy. National Defense Act of 1920. Regulations and matters in general for organized reserves. Army and uniform regulations, infantry drill regulations, field service regulations. Tables of organization. Citizens' military training camps. *Foreign:* Strength and distribution of foreign armies before the war. Uniforms. Strength of foreign armies up to date. History of armies of countries covered by Mr. Fleischer in general "Ask Adventure' section. *General:* Tactical questions on the late war. Detailed information on all operations during the late war from the viewpoint of the German high command. Questions regarding enlisted personnel and officers, except such as are published in Officers' Directory, can not be answered.

### J.—Navy Matters

Lieut. Francis V. Greene, U. S. N. R., 588 Bergen Street, Brooklyn, N. Y Regulations, history, customs, drill, gunnery; tactical and strategic questions, ships, propulsion, construction, classification; general information. Questions regarding the enlisted personnel and officers such as contained in the Register of Officers can not be answered

### K.-American Anthropology North of the Panama Canal

Arthur Woodward, 1244 ¼ Leighton Ave., Los Angeles, Calif. Customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions.

### L.—First Aid on the Trail

Claude P. Fordyce, M. D., Falls City, Neb. Medical and surgical emergency care, wounds, injuries, common illnesses, diet, pure water, clothing, insect and snake-bite; industrial first aid and sanitation for mines, logging camps, ranches and exploring parties as well as for camping trips of all kinds. First-aid outfits. Meeting all health hazards of the outdoor life, arctic, temperate and tropical zones.

### M.—Health-Building Outdoors

Claude P. Fordyce, M. D., Falls City, Neb. How to get well and how to keep well in the open air, where to go and how to travel. Tropical hygiene. General health-building, safe exercise, right food and habits, with as much adaptation as possible to particular cases.

### N.—Railroading in the U. S., Mexico and Canada

R. T. Newman, Box 833, Anaconda, Mont. General-office, especially immigration, work; advertising work, duties of station agent, bill clerk, ticket agent, passenger brakeman and rate clerk. General information.

### O.—Herpetology

Dr. G. K. Noble, American Museum of Natural History, 77th St., and Central Park West, New York, N. Y. General information concerning reptiles (snakes, lizards, turtles, crocodiles) and amphibians (frogs, toads, salamanders); their customs, habits and distribution.

### P.—Entomology

Dr. Frank E. Lutz, Ramsey, N. J. General information about insects and spiders; venomous insects, disease-carrying insects, insects attacking man, etc.; distribution.

## N.—STANDING INFORMATION

For **Camp-Fire Stations** write J. Cox, care *Adventure.*

For general information on **U. S.** and its **possessions**, write Supt. of Public Documents, Wash., D. C., for catalog of all Government publications. For **U. S., its possessions and most foreign countries,** the Dept., of Com., Wash., D. C.

For the **Philippines, Porto Rico,** and customs receiverships in **Santo Domingo** and **Haiti,** the Bureau of Insular Affairs, War Dept., Wash., D. C.

For **Alaska,** the Alaska Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Central Bldg., Seattle, Wash.

For **Hawaii,** Hawaii Promotion Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Honolulu, T. H. Also Dept. of the Interior, Wash., D. C.

For **Cuba,** Bureau of Information, Dept. of Agri., Com. and Labor, Havana, Cuba.

The Pan-American Union for general information on **Latin-American matters** or for specific data. Address L. S. Rowe, Dir. Gen., Wash., D. C.

For **R. C. M. P.,** Commissioner Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Ottawa, Can. Only unmarried British subjects, age 18 to 40, above 5 ft. 8 in. and under 175 lbs.

For **Canal Zone,** the Panama Canal Com., Wash., D. C.

National **Rifle** Association of America, Brig. Gen. Fred H. Phillips, Jr., Sec'y, 1108 Woodward Bldg., Wash., D. C.

United States **Revolver** Ass'n. W. A. Morrall, Sec'y-Treas., Hotel Virginia, Columbus, O.

**National Parks,** how to get there and what to do when there. Address National Park Service, Wash., D. C.

For whereabouts of **Navy men,** Bureau of Navigation, Navy Department, Wash., D. C.

### Cycling Across the Continent

AN INEXPENSIVE way of traveling, and a very pleasant one:

*Request:*—"Am planning on a trip to start from Portland on a bicycle and go east. Will start with seventy-five or one hundred dollars and outfit to camp. By working here and there to make expenses will go across continent.

Would it be possible to go down Snake River into Mississippi and down to mouth? With a good boat and motor and camping outfit it would be fine trip, if feasible.

Have had experiences with boats in fresh and salt water.

Time is no consideration.

Please advise if this trip would be possible. Would appreciate suggestions as to outfit, work and general conditions to meet."—D. B. Sergeant, Portland, Ore.

*Reply,* by Mr. Spears:—A bicycle would take you clear to New York, if you cared to go as far as that. I think, though, that if you worked out the trip, by going to Great Falls and Ft. Benton, Montana, then swapping the bicycle for a skiff, and going down the Missouri, you'd have a great variety and have a lot of fun.

You could start on the Republican river, or some other fork of the Missouri, but I believe it would be best to get below Great Falls. You could not readily follow the Snake on this trip.

A skiff eighteen feet long, with outboard motor, would be a dandy. You would go a trip I've always wanted to make.

For bicycle outfit, tarpaulin, woolen blanket, mess kit, change of underwear, army shirts (one cotton, one wool). Good bicycle shoes. Canteen for water. Luggage carrier.

You could probably make the whole trip across on one hundred dollars, on the bicycle. But that means care in expenses.

I'm surprized that more people don't tour on bicycles. Inexpensive and you see the country.

Make a short trip, of a few days, before making the big jump—practise and try out the outfit.

***The full statement of the departments, as given in this issue, is printed only in alternate issues.***

### Castaways of the South Pacific

HERE'S the personal experience of an "A. A." expert:

*Request:*—"In the opening paragraph of Chap. VIII of Mark Twain's 'Following the Equator' there is a statement to the effect that there were in the Fiji Islands two rescued castaways, found adrift in a canoe in starving condition, hundreds of miles from the nearest land and apparently of quite unknown tongue and country. The source of the statement is given in a footnote as Forbes' 'Two Years in Fiji.'

Can you give me any information as to the authenticity of this statement?

I may say that I have a very real admiration for Mark Twain, but not particularly as a source of encyclopedic information."—H. E. EGGERS, M. D., Omaha, Neb.

*Reply*, by Mr. C. Brown, Jr.:—Our friend Mark wrote the truth when he described those two rescued castaways. Such rescues are not uncommon in the South Pacific. Often it happens that a native, or even an entire canoe of natives, is blown hundreds of miles away from land. In many instances a few miles only were to be navigated.

I once put to sea with several Society Islanders. We were making a voyage of twenty-eight miles. The time consumed was one day and two nights. What do you think of that? Fortunately I had carried water and food aboard; the natives had brought nothing, trusting to the variable tradewinds for a voyage of a few hours.

When I was in Tahiti in the fall of 1922, two Tahitian tots, paddling an outrigger canoe in Papeete lagoon, were carried out to sea. Nothing was ever again heard of the children or the canoe.

Indeed, friend Mark wrote the truth.

### Huskies

THEY'RE not pedigreed, but they sure can pull a sleigh:

*Request*:—"I am very anxious to secure a good female husky, as near full-blood as possible.

I would like to get a young one, anywhere from two to six months old, so I can handle and train her myself.

I have one full-blooded female now, that I have had four years, but she was spayed before I got her, She is about nine years old, and weighs about eighty pounds. She is a good leader, and works fine, but is nearly spoiled for sled work by being petted so much.

I have trained several teams of scrubs, such as I was able to pick up with my dog as leader, with very good success, but they were too small and lacked stamina to be much good.

I expect to go to northern Wisconsin or Michigan to settle this spring, and I figure a good dog team would be handy to have around camp another winter.

I expect to start a small fur farm up there somewhere.

Have spent the last twenty years in the Adirondack Mountains (except from 1916 to 1919, which I spent in the Army), and am used to roughing it, and like it.

Would be very grateful for the following information:

The price of such a pup, and where I can obtain one?

What would two trained dogs cost?

Cost of shipping?

What, if any, duties for bringing into U. S.?

Would a cross with a German police, make a good sled dog?

What, and how much, do they feed a husky?

Which is the best—breastplate or collar harness?

What would a set of six harness cost?

Could I buy a light sled, such as they use up there?

What would one cost?

Could I get plans and have one built here cheaper?

Which is the best hitch—tandem or double?

Enclosed, please find self-addressed envelop and International Reply Coupon."—L. B. SANCOMB, Fort Sheridan, Ill.

*Reply*, by Mr. Hague:—I was very much interested to hear of your experiences with your huskies as I was closely associated with The Pas Dog Derby for some years and consequently have a very kindly feeling toward any dog-lover. Our Pas Derby is quite a unique event, being a non-stop race of two hundred miles. Last year the winning team, owned and driven by "Shorty" Russick, covered the distance in the almost incredible time of twenty-three hours and fifty-two minutes, a record which it will be hard to beat. Russick has lived in the north for a number of years and raised all his own dogs. They were a cross between a hound and a husky and were beautifully matched. At the end of the hard grind over the wilderness trails they appeared perfectly fresh and none of them displayed any ill effects as a result of their journey. Russick, it might be mentioned, trains his dogs by kindness and urges them on with a weird whistle. He is seldom if ever known to use a whip, but his dogs are very chary of strangers and pay little or no attention to any one but their master.

Now to get down to your questions:

I would advise you to write to Lionel H. C. Moore, The Pas, Man., H. Moxley and Sergeant W. Grennon, R. C. M. P., at the same town and they will give you the best advice available as to purchasing the huskies you require. I expect to remain in Winnipeg for some time or I would endeavor to attend to the matter for you personally. Prices range considerably and I have known an owner to refuse $700 for a team of eight first-class working and race dogs. This, however, was exceptional and you should be able to procure good huskies for around $35 apiece, although I can not give a definite price. The pup of course could be picked up comparatively cheap.

I have made inquiries and find that the cost of shipping a dog from The Pas to Emerson, on the United States border, would be $6.75 crated or $9 on a chain. An entry fee of $2 would have to be paid to get the dog into the States and 15 per cent. duty on the purchase price. Food could be attached to the crate with instructions to the train crew, who would look after feeding. You could find out shipping costs from the border to the dogs' destination from the American railway officials.

Larry Trimble, who trained Strongheart, the famous moving picture German police dog, was experimenting in breeding wolves and huskies with police dogs when I met him at Banff, during the dog races which he organized there a couple of years ago. I can not say what results he achieved. Our northern huskies are not famed for their ancestry, which is frequently uncertain, but are a peculiar mixture. Some of them have a dash of collie, airedale, hound and many other breeds and some of the best dogs are of unknown parentage. Occasionally one will get a whole litter of first-class dogs, while at other times only one out of a litter might be any good, and be a first-class animal.

Until the inception of dog racing at The Pas—

which by the way did more to bring about humane treatment of the dogs than anything else could have done—it was usual to throw a husky a frozen fish for supper but now the general diet is beef. The amount fed depends on whether a dog is working and how strenuous the work has been. The usual amount is one to two pounds fed each evening, but when in hard training for a race they are sometimes given as much as three pounds of good solid beef. During a race they are fed on small balls of chopped meat and tallow. The ordinary diet is occasionally relieved by a cooked mush of cornmeal and tallow with occasionally a little fish thrown in.

For tandem work the collar is used, but when working the dogs double the traces cross at the back of the neck and under the forefeet. Web harness, such as is used for racing and is very light but strong, would cost about $2.50 a set, I believe, but leather harness would be more expensive. You might write George Bullock, who makes a great deal of the harness for the dog men in The Pas. For a good trail the Alaskan double hitch is much the better but for a very narrow bush trail the tandem harnessing is probably superior.

The sleigh consists of two long runners braced some two feet apart. In some instances the runners are waxed and in other cases hickory, plain birch or black poplar is used. Two handlebars give the driver support when he is running behind the team or standing with one foot on either runner. In the center of the sleigh is a brake, used for sudden stops or on steep grades.

Bill Grayson, who twice drove C. B. Morgan's team to victory in The Pas Dog Derby, is now making sleighs for the Pas Canoe Company. You might write him for particulars of cost, etc. I believe they run about $30.

If you could take a trip to The Pas and look things over for yourself, you would derive a great deal more information than it has been possible for me to give you in this long and rather involved epistle.

***If you don't want an answer enough to enclose full return postage to carry it, you don't want it.***

### A Land Fit for Tourists

BUT which doesn't appeal to the permanent resident:

*Request:*—"I want to leave Canada, as the cold climate does not agree with me. I would like to move to a country where English is spoken and which is under British or American rule.

I note that you supply information on Tripoli, the Sahara and Arabia, and I thought, perhaps, you could give me some information about Egypt.

I would like to know as much as possible about living conditions, the climate, the inhabitants, and their customs; traveling; caravans; the Arabs and their life; the mineral and agricultural resources of the country. What opportunities does Egypt offer to a man?

If you can not supply this information, perhaps you can tell me where I could obtain it."—P. LONGUEVAL, Sirdar, B. C.

*Reply*, by Capt. Giddings:—Just last week I was discussing with a friend that much sought region "God's country," and do you know where I placed it? Not a hundred miles from you! As I remember Sirdar it is the last station going west before reaching Kootenay Landing. I said that I would rather live in or around Nelson or Kaslo than any other spot on the globe. And you want to leave that country, go to a barren desert, and live with a people whose customs are such that you will be as long as you live a comparative stranger and always an outsider.

Egypt is attractive only to the tourist. The resident—I mean the *feringhi*, European or American—despises it. These countries are not pleasant to live in, though they are mightily so to visit. Personally, I hate a sun-baked desolation; a torrid, brassy sun; a verminous people. All these things and more you will find in Egypt.

If the climate is too cold for you in British Columbia, move south to Florida, Georgia, the Carolinas especially, or Louisiana. The Gulf Coast section of Mississippi is fast becoming a famous resort and it has a splendid climate, especially during the winter.

If you are still determined to go, after you read this letter, let me know. I'll give you what help I can. But I'd give a lot right now to be within a hundred miles of you.

***Address your question direct to the expert in charge, NOT to the magazine.***

### Fishing in Maine

SEEMS to be one part good management and nine parts good luck:

*Request:*—"Being a chronic old fisherman, I would like to know if there is any better fishing than I have had in the northern part of Maine.

Where is the best fishing in Maine? Stream and Pond. Is there a map printed that gives the small streams and ponds in the northern part of the State?"—P. M. DENACO, Albion, Maine.

*Reply*, by Dr. Hathorne:—You have given me quite a proposition to answer, I might say the "best fishing" is where they bite, and if you read the sporting camp ads., you will learn the "best fishing" is in the vicinity of that particular camp. As a rule, a good fisherman can secure the legal limit in most places, although there are times when they refuse to take a fly or bait, in some of the best waters in the State. The Moosehead Lake region has its devotees as well as the Rangely region and down in Washington County. There is a map published by Dillingham Book Store of this city that gives a very good idea of the streams and ponds of Northern Maine. I think it sells for $1.00.

If you will write to Geo. M. Houghton, B. & A. R.R., Bangor, Me., enclosing ten cent stamps, he will send you a copy of "In the Maine Woods" which has a lot of good dope about the fishing along the line of the B. & A. R.R. with maps, etc.

### Diamond-Sorting

DOPE for the would-be prospector:

*Request:*—"I am going on a prospecting trip for diamonds and have been searching for information regarding the best way to recover these gems.

I have read of the 'grease table' used in South African mines but can not get details of its construction and operation. I would like to construct a small portable device of this kind and should like to know how to go about it—how much grease to use, what kind, should the table vibrate, at what angle should it be placed, etc.?

If you possibly can help me I would be very thankful."—E. W. Flinker, Brooklyn, N. Y.

*Reply*, by Mr. Victor Shaw:—Your "grease tables" in diamond-sorting is a new one to me; I am fairly familiar with Kimberley practise but never heard of them. So far as I am informed the Kimberley, DeBeers and Dutoitspan systems hoist the "blue"—which is the local term for kimberlite, a serpentine derived from peridotite, and occurring in pipes which are mined by tunnels and stopes—to surface and spread out exposed to the air covering immense areas. When disintegrated through air and weather action, this pay-dirt is sent by belt-conveyor or tram-cars to top of mill, through trommels for cleaning and classifying, gravitators for separating the diamonds, and on to a sorting table. This table merely works out all stones through gravity and the stones are picked off by hand and sent to experts to further sort according to value.

There was a report by Mr. Kitson of Gold Coast Geological Survey in the Commerce Reports for Dec., 1919, of a new diamond field on the Gold Coast. Reported rich; stones said to vary greatly in size. Many found by panning while country was being tested.

British Guiana has a very good field on the Kurupung river, some 150 to 200 miles inland from Georgetown. You'd need at least $2,000 capital to outfit and take you in. Climate tropical. Diamonds are washed out from river-bars together with placer gold. The yield has been good and the stones of good size and grade. I can give you complete dope on the Kurupung field, if you wish. You have me at a loss though with your "grease table," which I am inclined to doubt as a fact. Write again if I can help you out any.

### About the First Sergeant

HIS chevron; his duties; corresponding rank in the British Army:

*Request:*—"1. What is the present regulation chevron for first sergeants? What colors?

2. What are the functions of the first sergeant in action?

3. What non-commissioned officer in the British Army corresponds to the first sergeant?

4. Why do the bass-drummers in British Army bands wear leather or leopard-skin aprons?

I am enclosing addressed envelop and postage for your reply.

If this letter is published please omit name and address."—A. W. M.

*Reply*, by Mr. Fleischer:—I shall answer your questions in rotation:

1. The present chevron of a first sergeant is the old chevron of the battalion sergeant major, with the diamond under the last open triangle and just above the first lower arc. Color O.D. (olive drab.)

2. The first sergeant is with company headquarters, but it is hard to say just what his position would be in action. He may be well forward with the C.C. or between the attacking platoon and the support; he may command a platoon or the company if all officers have gone west. What he does in action depends upon the action, and no set rule can be laid down.

3. The first sergeant in our Army is the company sergeant major in the British Army.

4. Because the British have a tendency to hold on to traditions and because bandsmen in the British Army have for centuries worn distinguishing uniforms from the rest of the rank and file. I have not been able to ascertain the origin of the custom, but it dates back to at least the fifteenth century.

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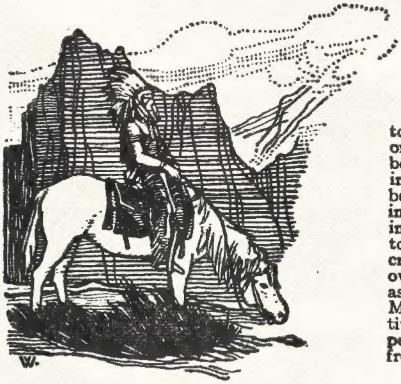

## LOST TRAILS

Note—We offer this department of the "Camp-Fire" free of charge to those of our readers who wish to get in touch again with old friends or acquaintances from whom the years have separated them. For the benefit of the friend you seek, *give your own name if possible.* All inquiries along this line, unless containing contrary instructions, will be considered as intended for publication in full with inquirer's name, in this department, at our discretion. We reserve the right in case inquirer refuses his name, to substitute any numbers or other names, to reject any item that seems to us unsuitable, and to use our discretion in all matters pertaining to this department. Give also your own full address. We will, however, forward mail through this office, assuming no responsibility therefor. We have arranged with the Montreal *Star* to give additional publication in their "Missing Relative Column," weekly and daily editions, to any of our inquiries for persons last heard of in Canada. Except in case of relatives, inquiries from one sex to the other are barred.

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McMAHON, ANDY. Write your mother. She is in bad health. There is a letter for you in *Adventure* office.—Address Mrs. Julia McMahon, Gen. Del., Folsom, Calif.

McMORROW, PADDY AND DENIS. Left Glen Farm, Briscloonagh, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, Ireland, long time ago. Paddy last heard of in Troy City. Any information will be appreciated.—Address Ellen McMorrow, Bracramore, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, Ireland.

LEWIS, OSCAR. Soldiered with me in the Philippine Islands, Co. C., 8th Infantry, during the years of 1915 and 1916. His home was then in St. Louis, Mo. Any information will be appreciated.—Address Corporal Forrest C. Mayle, Co. E, 14th Infantry, Ft. Davis, Gatun, C. Z.

ANGLE. Write to your old bunkie of the old 11th.—Address F. Karston, care B. M. S., Hot Springs, South Dakota.

**A LIST of unclaimed manuscripts will be published in the July 20th issue of Adventure, and a list of unclaimed mail will be published in the last issue of each month.**

KAUFMAN. Discharged from army at Manila, P. I., about 1914, returning to U. S. shortly afterward. Write an old pal, as have excellent position for you.—Address C., Box 253, Portsmouth, Virginia.

DUTTON, LOUSA or LOUSA THOMAS or ELIZABETH BRIN. Last heard of in Eureka Springs, Arkansas in 1906. Anyone knowing her whereabouts please communicate with her husband.—Address W. H. DUTTON, 813 E. Sixth St., Little Rock, Ark.

LEGGAT, JOHN. Well known quoit player. Left Wishaw, Scotland about forty years ago for New Zealand. Any information will be appreciated by his old chum.—Address JOHN INGLIS, Gen. Delivery, Hamilton, Ont., Canada.

O'CONNOR, JOHN J. Last seen in Pittsburgh, Pa. in 1914. Was a furniture salesman at the W. H. Keech Co., Penn Ave., Pittsburgh for twelve years. Any information will be appreciated by his daughter.—Address MRS. CAROLYN BRYDE, 2025 N. Broad St., Phila., Pa.

ORDWAY, CHARLES P. Last heard of at Pelly Goose, Texas. Member of Brotherhood of Trainmen, Knights of Pythias, and Moose lodges. Any information will be appreciated by his friend.—Address E. M. BAKER, 1995 Harris St., Eugene, Oregon.

**Please notify us at once when you have found your man.**

BERT. Why don't you write to your mother. She is all alone now since Mr. Taylor is dead and Leona is married. You know she needs you and is worried about you. Come home or write.—Address MRS. LILLIE TAYLOR, Box 534, Salmon, Idaho.

NOLTE, WALTER. Would like very much to hear from you. Write me at home.—Address J. K. W.

CORNING, HAROLD. Formerly with Batt. "E," 7th F. A. Write your old army mate.—Address J. K. WALTON, 721 Belmont Ave., Chicago, Ill.

**THE following have been inquired for in either the March 20, 1925, or April 10, 1925, issues of Adventure. They can get the name and address of the inquirer from this magazine.**

BAKER, CAPT. JAMES J.; Beyersdorfer, Albert G. (Joe Bush); Brown, George; Charles, H.; Clute, Henry C. who died about 1880; Cummins, Norman; Dean, Will; Dreyer, Herbert; Duffield, Harry A.; Frake, William; Holliday, Robert Emmett; Hopkins, Louis; McKay, John; O'Shea, Jim; Reycroft, Lloyd C.; Shumbarger, Edward H.; Walters, Harry A.; Younglove, Emily.

MISCELLANEOUS—Darling Jack please let me know where you are: Would like to hear from those who knew me while serving in Camp Supply Detachment, Q.M.C. Camp Merritt, N. J.

**UNCLAIMED MAIL.**—T. A. McMahon.

# THE TRAIL AHEAD

## MAY 10TH ISSUE

Besides the **new serial** and the **three complete novelettes** mentioned on the second contents page of this issue, the next *Adventure* will bring you the following stories:

**SLEEP** *Larry Barretto*
He swam the Marne in a hail of bullets.

**ALBERT BROWN** *Percy Charles Chandler*
Cockney tactics in South America.

**CALVERT OF ALLOBAR Conclusion** *Robert Simpson*
The making of a king of Ibo-land.

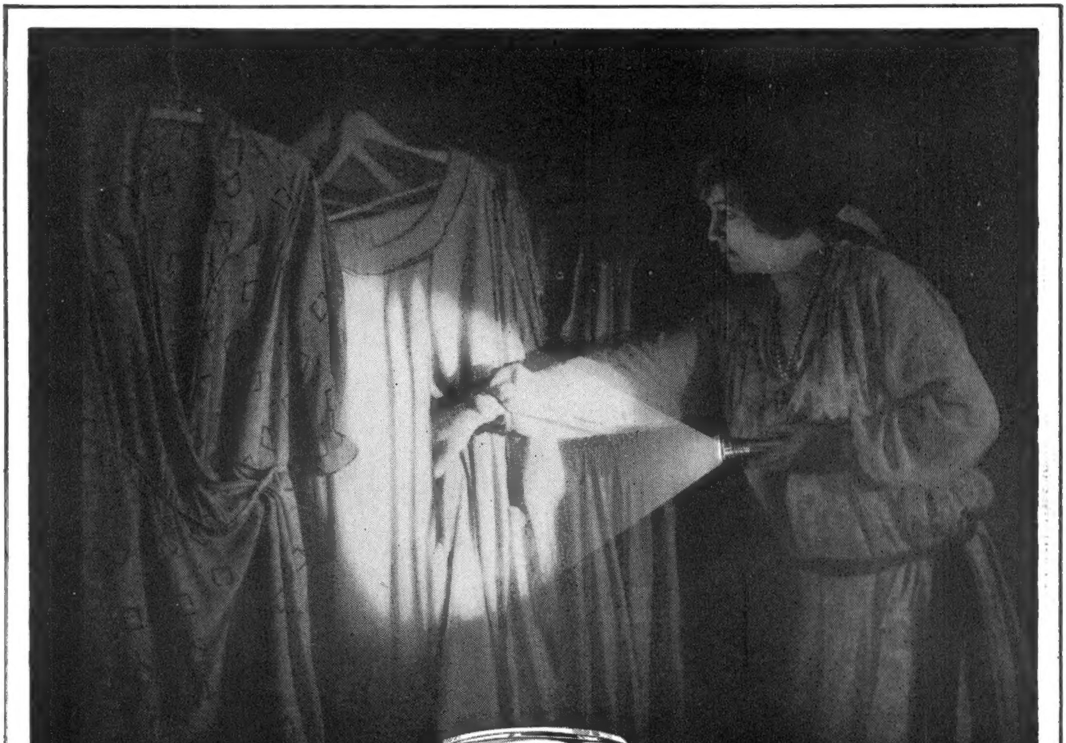
**BUNG UP AND BILGE FREE** *Captain Mansfield*
A new kind of skeleton is exposed.

**BATTLE FIRE** *Lewis H. Kilpatrick*
Kentucky mountain mysteries are not all moonshine.

# Still Farther Ahead

THE three issues following the next will contain *long* stories by Talbot Mundy, Gordon MacCreagh, W. C. Tuttle, Hugh Pendexter, James Aton, T. Samson Miller, William Byron Mowery, George E. Holt, Thomson Burtis and G. W. Barrington; and short stories by John Webb, Howard Ellis Davis, Theodore Seixas Solomons, William Westrup, Charles King Van Riper, Raymond S. Spears, Negley Farson, L. Paul, Captain Dingle, Leo Walmsley, Ralph R. Perry, Fairfax Downey, Henry S. Whitehead and others; stories of the ancient Romans in the British Isles, Yankee explorers up the Amazon, hardcase skippers on the high seas, wanderers on the Western range, beachcombers in the South Seas, mounted policemen in the North, desert riders in Morocco, aviators in the oilfields, robber barons on the Rhine, adventurers the world around.

# In that deep, dark closet—*use your flashlight!*



Don't grope in dark closets. Use your flashlight! To rummage in dark or dim-lighted places, use your flashlight! You can plunge a lighted Eveready into the most inflammable materials with perfect safety. Bright light, right where you want it. Safe light, wherever you need it. Keep an Eveready where you can get your hands on it instantly for those countless uses after dark. Improved models meet every need for light—indoors and out. There is a type for every purpose and purse. New features. New designs. New reasons for owning this safe, handy light.

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Reload your flashlights and keep them on the job with fresh, strong Eveready Unit Cells. And if you haven't a flashlight, see the nearest Eveready dealer at once. Buy the improved Eveready Flashlights from electrical, hardware and marine supply dealers, sporting goods and general stores, garages and auto accessory shops.

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**FLASHLIGHTS**
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# Why Did Pirates Wear Whiskers?

In days of old the Pirate bold feared the razor far more than the cutlass. The swashbuckling ferocity that so successfully terrorized his enemies had disastrous results when applied to his own face.

Shaving—even in a hurry—has become much safer since Lysol Shaving Cream appeared. Safer, easier and much more pleasant. Lysol Shaving Cream gives quantities of clean billowy lather. It quickly softens the toughest beard. It contains just the right amount of the famous antiseptic Lysol to make it soothing and healing. It protects the skin when torn or cut by the razor and guards against infection.

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